

THE
MONTHLY MISCELLANY.

VOL. V.

NOVEMBER, 1841.

No. 5.

ON THE SUPPOSED SAFETY OF MULTIPLYING THE ARTICLES OF OUR RELIGIOUS BELIEF; OR OF ADOPTING A LARGE AND COMPREHENSIVE CREED.

It is not unfrequently supposed with more or less distinctness, and sometimes very confidently stated in conversation,—and what is more and worse, referred to as a fact worth regarding in the choice of our religious opinions,—that there is a peculiar safety in multiplying the articles of our religious belief, or in the adoption of a large and comprehensive creed. Those who take this view of the subject argue, we believe, in this way:—"If our larger system of faith be the true one, then all those who embrace one which is less and simpler, are plainly in the wrong, and it may be, fatally so; they err through *defect* of faith. Whereas, admitting it to be possible that their less and simpler faith is the true one, we are still safe, since ours embraces all theirs and more besides." The very *excess* of their faith, their *over-belief*, if we may use such incongruous phrases, places them, as they think, in safety, while the defect of faith, or the under-belief of those who embrace a less exacting creed leaves them without a remedy.

There may be something specious in this statement on first view, and it may be therefore worth examination; though, as we

shall attempt to show, it betrays great ignorance of the real nature of religious belief, proceeds entirely on false grounds, and discovers singular confusion of thought.

In proceeding to illustrate this we first observe, that the idea that there is any safety in the simple act of multiplying our articles of religious belief is founded obviously on the position, which is taken at the outset as granted,—that men can believe or not, or as much or as little, as they please. In other words, that *belief is a matter of choice*. For, if there be no choice in the matter, then of consequence there is no merit, either in the simple act of believing or in not believing. Where there is no will, no election, no self-determining power, all idea of good or ill-desert is obviously out of the question. Then the inquiry is reduced to this;—is it at any person's option, what, or how much, or how little, he will believe, in religion or in respect to any other subject? Certainly it is not. We all know that it is not. Without going into any abstruse speculations on the nature of human belief, which we mean to avoid in this discussion, but which would put the fact beyond all doubt, we all *know*, we say, as well as we know any thing, that we cannot believe as we wish or will, but that we must believe according to the evidence, or what at the time seems to us to be evidence, which is presented to our minds. Let any man who has attained, or desires to attain, a settled belief or disbelief on any subject, endeavour to change his present convictions by a mere effort of the will, and he will find all such effort is unavailing. Urge upon him whatever motive you may,—caress him, blame him, punish him, torture him, crucify him, if you will,—still his mind, if he is a rational being, must see and judge of things as they appear to it. To alter its impressions, you must alter the causes which produce them. To alter its perceptions, you must alter the things perceived, or the light or aspect in which they are presented to it. To alter its belief, you must change the evidence on which this belief rests. We all know that this is the fact; the consciousness of every reader of these sentences,—consciousness, we say, which is the ultimate authority and arbiter in all questions of this kind,—responds to the substantial and literal truth of this position, and this is enough. It is just as true and philosophical to say that the will can directly control the operations of sight, feel-

ing and hearing, as to say that it can directly control the operations of the mind in believing. It is as wise to call upon a man to alter his perceptions of the external objects presented to his senses by a mere effort of the will, as it is to call upon him to believe or disbelieve any truth presented to his mind by a mere effort of the will. When he can *look* black into white, or white into black, it will be time enough to urge him to apprehend error as truth, or truth as error. To change in either case his convictions, you must change the grounds on which these convictions are based. Have we never heard of persons being convinced against their wills? Has not each of us, a hundred times over, been convinced in opposition to his strongest desires and most urgent efforts to the contrary? Have we not also, on the other hand, often tried to become convinced of the truth of certain propositions, but without success? If all this be so,—and it is all so plain, that we have felt a sort of humiliation in stating it in so many words,—does it not amount to a conclusive proof, that all rational belief or faith must, by the very constitution of our natures, be wholly governed by the evidence which is present to our minds, and not by our wishes or our wills? Now,—to bring this statement to bear upon the point before us,—if, in the first place, it be admitted that merit or demerit, good or ill-desert can only belong to those actions in which we possess the power of choice,—a position which nobody, qualified to judge, will call in question; and if, in the next place, it be admitted as a fact that the mere act of believing is entirely independent of this power of choice,—a fact which is equally clear; then it necessarily follows, that in a moral point of view there is no more merit, and therefore no more *safety* in the *mere act* of receiving a great, than in receiving a small number of articles of religious faith.

And here it may be naturally enough asked,—is there no value or merit in Christian belief? We answer, yes, the greatest. But they do not consist in the mere act of believing, where there is no choice in the matter. Christian faith, *taken in connection with all that belongs to it*, will be found to deserve the high rank among the Christian graces which has been assigned to it in the Christian Scriptures. In what then do its value and merit consist? Its *value* is apparent from the fact, that it is the source of conduct,

the rule of life. A man, so far as he is a rational agent, is as he believes' His faith is the ground-work of his character,—that character which, as it is to outlast "things seen and temporal," so has close and indissoluble connections with "things unseen and eternal." It is the source of all his higher and worthier hopes and aspirations as an immortal being. "By grace ye are saved through faith." No words, therefore, can fitly express its value. Its *merit* is apparent from those moral dispositions and qualities which it involves and implies. And these too are of the highest and most concerning import. Though, as has been shown, the mind must apprehend subjects as they appear to it, yet in every act of faith or belief there are moral capacities included, which render us properly the subjects of blame or approval. It is in our power, as we all know, to direct our attention at will; to listen, or to refuse to listen to argument; to regard, or disregard subsidiary circumstances; to contemplate subjects with candour, or with prejudice; to cultivate those moral habits which will lay the mind open to the fair effect of evidence, or to indulge in those low and debasing trains of thought and sentiment which will indispose us to the reception of those pure and heavenly instructions by which our evil wills and evil deeds are reprov'd; that, in a word, there is an atheism of the heart, and an atheism of the life, that lead directly to an utter atheism of the mind. All this is voluntary, all this is within our power; and here it is, and not in the simple act of believing less or more, that all the merit or demerit lies.

Will it be said then, that the simple fact of receiving a large and exacting creed is of itself an evidence of the existence of those moral qualities which give to Christian faith its value and merit? If so, we are constrained to deny the position altogether. We are well aware indeed of the intimate connection which exists between our moral and mental powers; that he "who doeth the will of God shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of Him;" and that a holy life is an essential prerequisite to a full and antecedating faith. But the converse of all this is not true. A man may believe the truth, and yet this faith be inoperative upon his life. The demons, we are told, believe, and tremble too, but are demons still. Certainly we are not now to learn, that there may be such a thing as a merely speculative faith,—a faith no more influential

upon the conduct than our apprehensions of the internal economy of the moon or planets. It is not true to say, that any belief, however comprehensive or authoritative, necessarily implies *any* moral qualities.

Besides, if this position were well founded, it must of consequence follow, that the most *credulous* man would be the *best* man,—an inference which, we need not say, is wholly opposed to the fact. No ; the temper of mind to be prized, and that which is essential to a sound faith, is not one which is ready to receive any thing and everything for truth that claims to be such, or one which by a sort of indolent, confused, or timid assent to much for which a Divine authority is claimed, hopes to find an excuse for not examining more ; but it is a temper of mind which is deeply solicitous to ascertain what the truth really is, and which values this truth too highly not to take all possible care that it be not debased by error. It consists not in an easy disposition to receive all that is presented to it,—not in a *great capacity of believing* ; but in keeping the mind open to the fair effect of evidence, come whence, and lead where it may. In a word, it consists in a *teachable*, not in a *credulous* state of mind. We ought to prize the truth too highly to be willing to take any counterfeits for it, that may seem to resemble it.

In the next place, we repudiate the principle that there is any safety in the mere multiplying of the articles of our religious belief, because it leads to false and absurd results. If it prove any thing, it proves too much. It makes our safety to depend not in believing what we have ascertained on satisfactory grounds to be worthy of belief, but in the extent and comprehensiveness of our creed,—so that however unfounded and false it may be in many particulars, it will nevertheless *stand the better chance* of including what *is* true. Is it not obvious then, that by the same course of reasoning we ought to embrace all the thousand creeds that exist in Christendom ; nay further, all that Jews, Mahometans, Hindoos, and whatever other sects of religionists there may be in the world have believed ? The principle is, that we are safe in having an extensive faith. How much safer then must it be to have one which includes all religions, than one which, however large it may be, yet only includes a single form of religion ? Is

it not plain in this aspect of the subject, that the advantage claimed by those who urge the extent of their belief as being a ground of safety is wholly unfounded; and if carried out into its legitimate consequences, would lead them to embrace any thing and everything that men, with or without reason, have chosen to call religion?

We reject the position that there is safety in the mere multiplication of our articles of religious belief, because, in the third place, the principle in another point of view appears to be totally erroneous. It is safer, it is said, to receive a large and comprehensive creed,—that is, one which embraces numerous doctrines,—because *the larger includes the less*. The simple, direct and obvious reply to this is, that it is not true, in point of fact, that those systems of faith which are the largest and most comprehensive do embrace or include those which are simpler. So far from this, it is on the contrary the fact, that the one is altogether opposed to the other. We may illustrate this in a few particulars. A belief, for example, that God shares his very nature, personality and perfections with other beings, certainly does not contain the belief that he is absolutely one in nature, personality and power. A belief that there are “distinctions” in the Godhead which authorize us to address him as at the same time a compounded and a single Being, or as one and more than one, does not contain the doctrine that there are *no* such distinctions. A belief that our Lord Jesus Christ is the same being with the Father, does not contain the belief that he is not the same being, but the Father’s Son. A belief in the personality of the holy Spirit, does not contain the belief that it possesses no such personality, but is only an influence or operation of God himself upon the minds of men. A belief that some men are born into this life with an inherited curse entailed upon them does not contain the belief, that all men are always and in all circumstances under the equal care of a common Father in Heaven, “who is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” But we need not multiply these examples. It is evident that the greater faith, so called, does not *contain* the less. It is entirely *different* from it. It is directly *opposite* to it. It is *irreconcilable* with it. And if so, there is no safety in receiving it on the grounds here proposed, any more than there is in receiving any thing else, however absurd, that has been

put in the place of pure Christianity. The question between these conflicting forms of religious belief then is—which is the true? And in this aspect of the subject it is plain, that the argument may be retorted upon those who urge it. It may be said with equal propriety by either to the other;—if I am in the right, you are in the wrong,—for the same reason, that if you are in the right, I am in the wrong;—and neither party has any advantage over the other, from the simple circumstance that his creed is more or less comprehensive than that of the other.

But there is another ground on which the safety of believing much, or more than others, is sometimes rested, which, like the former, derives its speciousness from its vagueness and from the confusion of thought involved, and which on this account requires to be noticed. By much or more believing, it may be said, is not meant the reception of a greater number of articles, but *more of those which are revealed in Scripture*. But what can be more obvious than that this is a specimen of that species of logical fallacy called *petitio principii*, or in plain English a begging of the point at issue? It is taking as granted the very thing to be proved. Persons who urge this argument may doubtless be honest in their belief that their faith is more Scriptural than ours; but we, on the other hand, claim to be equally honest in believing that our faith is more Scriptural than theirs. As their faith on this account is more satisfactory to them than ours, so on this account ours is more satisfactory to us than theirs. Either has as good authority to say this as the other, and until the question is determined which is the more Scriptural, the claim is equally unavailing for both.

Besides, it is evident that by this argument they entirely change the ground of their supposed safety in believing. They hereby no longer claim precedence over their fellow-Christians on account of their *much or more* believing, but on account of their *truer or more Scriptural* belief. Whether this assumption be well founded or not, we are not here concerned to discuss. It is sufficient for our present purpose, that they have abandoned that hold which we are endeavoring to demolish.

But further, the merit of this multifold and comprehensive faith may be thought to consist in the fact, that it *makes great demands upon our capacity of belief, and requires a total or partial surrender*

of our rational faculties. Strange as it may seem to a clear and enlightened thinker, there is doubtless a sentiment or impression very prevalent among a large class of our fellow-Christians, that they offer an acceptable service to God when they make a "sacrifice," as they are wont to call it, "of reason to faith," and that a large and exacting creed, which involves such a sacrifice, is on this account especially to be preferred. Passing by without remarking particularly on the confusion of thought that must prevail in the minds of those who entertain this opinion,—just as if it were possible to believe revealed truth, or any thing else, but by the use of our rational faculties,—passing this, we would observe that it is most irrational in itself, and it is wholly unauthorized by Scripture, to suppose that God requires an absolute or partial "sacrifice" or renunciation of any of the faculties which he has given us as a prerequisite to our becoming Christians; and least of all does He require the sacrifice or renunciation of those rational powers, by which alone we can render to Him a rational service. Christianity, as we understand it, is offered to our acceptance, not for the purpose of crippling and destroying our intellectual and moral capacities, but to bring all these, and all things else that constitute us men, into healthful and vigorous action. We cannot but think therefore, that a sacrifice which requires us to forego and disavow the use of those faculties by which we are made to be responsible agents, raised to a rank only "a little lower than that of the angels," and assimilated to God himself, is an unblessed sacrifice; and that a creed therefore which requires a disavowal like this, so far from possessing on this account any peculiar advantage, is on this very ground to be rejected and repudiated.

Again; what is meant by the terms "large" and "comprehensive," as applied to faith? They imply a reference to some standard of admeasurement. What then is this standard? Is it the pure and whole truth of religion? This is not known or knowable to men; to apprehend this is the uncommunicated prerogative of God alone. The terms "large" and "comprehensive" then must have reference to the faith of others, which is supposed to be less and more partial. But what or who is to decide this question of greater or less?—Whatsoever any individual after employing the best means in his power believes to be true, is *the truth to him*.

The same is to be asserted of the belief of every other faithful and conscientious inquirer who lives. The faith of any one such inquirer is as *great* to him, in any proper sense of the term, as is the faith of any other such inquirer *great* to him; and, in the absence of any infallible standard above alluded to, neither has a right to call his faith *greater*, that is one containing more truth, than that of another. This serves still further to show, with what confusion of thought the whole subject of Christian faith is often apprehended.

That state of mind, we further observe, which is indicated in the reason assigned for thus multiplying the articles or increasing the extent of a creed, has small claims upon our sympathy, confidence or respect. It discovers no genuine love of the truth as such, and still less of that temper of mind which should be brought to the investigation of it. It proceeds upon a principle of a sort of worldly thrift, which is willing to *run the risk* of taking much that is false, in the hope of securing that which is true. Instead of regarding it as that "pearl of great price," which is cheaply bought at the sacrifice of all things else, it is willing to take the chance of obtaining the gem, by gathering up with equal care the worthless sand in which it is supposed to be imbedded. Instead of endeavouring first to find the "hid treasure," and then buying the "field in which it is hid," even at the sacrifice "of all that one hath," it contents itself with an indolent purchase, that may perchance include the treasure. Certainly a creed thus formed is "like unto a net that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind; and when it was full, they drew to the shore, and sat down" contented with it, and gathered *not* "the good into vessels, and cast" *not* "the bad away." And shall any professed follower of him "who came to bear witness of the *truth*," venture to claim a preference for a creed like this?

But how futile, how worse than futile is the claim that there is *safety* in multiplying the articles of our religious belief! Faith, if it be of any efficacy or any value, must be a practical principle. It must pervade the heart; it must operate upon the life; it must be carried into its appropriate acts. A man, if he conduct rationally, is and does what he is and does according to his faith. Can there then be any peculiar safety, can there be *any* safety, in

adopting an extensive series of dogmas of belief, some of which,—by the very supposition, for aught that is really known on the subject,—may be obscure, some half-true, some false, some defamatory of the character of God and degrading to the nature and condition of man? What a man believes, as we have said, is the truth to him; and at any rate, he must act upon it if he act at all. Suppose then, for example, that he receives as matter of faith all the articles of doctrine in the “Assembly’s Catechism;” and suppose further, that some of these articles are unscriptural and untrue,—a supposition that is at least possible, since this body of faith is confessedly of human origin; is there any peculiar safety, or any safety, in believing those errors which must from the nature of the case operate injuriously upon the conduct? Must it here and now be stated in so many words, that bad and demoralizing doctrines must have a bad and demoralizing effect upon the life, and that there is no safety in adopting, wholesale and almost at hazard, a creed which may, and probably does, contain such doctrines?

We take leave of this subject with a single additional remark. It is not to be inferred from the general drift of our argument, that we deem it of small consequence whether a man believes much or little of revealed truth. On the contrary, we consider the state of our minds in reference to this more important than all things else. A pure, strong, efficacious *Christian* faith is the best and crowning blessing of this transitory state; and there is nothing that this world has to give, which is to be put in competition with it for a single instant. It is on this account, and on this alone, we would endeavour to correct what seems to us to be important errors in regard to it. One of these consists, as we are constrained to think, and for the reasons which we have endeavoured here to assign, in an obscure and unexamined, and therefore prevailing impression, that there is safety in embracing a religious creed of large dimensions, one that makes great demands on our capacity of believing. But the truth is, that religious doctrines are not to be valued on account of their number, or their exacting character; but on account of their truth and practical effects. What is mainly of importance is—not believing much, or professedly believing incredible things—but endeavouring to believe the “truth as it is in Jesus,” and submitting our hearts and lives to its influence.

J. B.

THE FOLLY OF WAR.

NATURE, it is said, shudders at the idea of dissolution. And so great is the reluctance to encounter the unknown world, or so great is the fear of annihilation, that comparatively few minds are willing to contemplate expected death. We feel for others also, as well as for ourselves. Within a few years many lamentable occurrences have taken place, by which some hundreds at a moment have been taken together from the enjoyments and hopes of the present life. The burning of several vessels upon our own waters and the loss of a few in unknown circumstances at sea have deeply affected the public mind. The public sympathy is expressed through the public prints, and the ministers of religion have been drawing a variety of lessons, for the consolation of survivors and for the warning of all, from circumstances so painful. We cannot even listen without deep emotion to the account of the death of a single individual by accident; and such an accident, when an individual well known to the public is the subject of it, casts a gloom over the activity of men of business and the enjoyments of the social circle.

And yet, upon the other hand, we read of thousands removed by the atrocities of war with much less sympathy for the sufferings of those who have been deprived of life, and of those who are peculiarly interested as survivors. We lament with far less sorrow the loss of the great and good in war. The number itself of victims, the immeasurable magnitude of the evil, seems to overpower and fatigue the imagination. We do not turn from the account of a battle to imagine how many wives have become widows by its occurrence, and how many unavailing tears will be shed by widows' eyes for the loss of only sons. We do not go to the battle-field to imagine what horror of agony oppresses some in the feeling of the death-stroke, what remorse of conscience afflicts some in the remembrance of guilt, what pain subdues others in the thought of wife and children left desolate. Life is dear to us; but when thousands die upon the field of battle, we read of the occurrence with little more emotion than if a thousand machines, able to do so much work, were suddenly rendered useless for the service of the country.

Many other evils attend war than the miseries of death in battle, and the miseries endured by surviving friends. In fact, to the calmly reflecting, the far-seeing mind, the miseries of the battlefield and of desolate homes are much less to be regarded and regretted, than the general confusion which prevails in the business transactions of a nation at war, the cessation of employment for many thousands for whom want of employment is want of bread, the spirit of speculation which war engenders, and the demoralization which naturally follows poverty and confusion and violence. Yet while these various evils exist as the inevitable consequence of war, people daily speak of it; editors of newspapers, to whom is intrusted in a great degree the guidance of public feeling, endeavour sometimes to awaken such feelings towards other nations as tend directly to produce war; Congress contemplates the probability of its occurrence, and makes yearly appropriation for national defence; and the cabinet ministers, of all countries, closeted with chief magistrates, inquire every year if it is not now time to let loose the dogs of war and spur them on to destruction. Yes; they contemplate calmly the horrors of war, and tell us that wars are unavoidable.

Wars unavoidable! Are they not foolish in the extreme? War, it is supposed, is the last resort of an injured nation seeking to preserve its honour or defend its rights. War arises upon some contested question. Yet fighting does not decide right: a duel, or walking upon heated plough-shares, is as reasonable a way of discovering which side of a contested question is the right one. Every question between nations, as every question between individuals, may be decided by its merits alone: reason and learning applied to the investigation of right will discover it; or if they fail, justice can easily decide what compromise should be made for the settlement of a difficulty in which two parties may be equally right and wrong.

Why should not every disputed question between nations be settled simply by the decision of reason? Does America wish to be unjust to England? Is America afraid to be just, or unwilling to give to others their just dues? We do not suppose the injustice of America; but England, it is replied, is not just. Let it be observed, however, this is *our* decision. We are interested, and

ought not to make the decision. We are judges in our own quarrel, and no man should be the judge in his own quarrel. Let the wise men, let the learned men in other nations,—even let the kings and princes of other nations, if they are supposed to be wise,—decide for us, and let us abide by the decision. A decision in a case now disputed may be against us; but we might safely rest in such a decision when we remember that self-interest may be expected to blind us, and that the passions which we feel may blind us still more.

But if we will not appeal to reason,—if we will not do, as individuals do, that is, leave our case to the decision of wise and unprejudiced persons,—at least let us consider beforehand what are the advantages of war. As war cannot aid the reason to discover truth, so it cannot help us to a decision, when the strife is over. We become tired of fighting, and more disposed at last to argue, for to argument we must come at last. By injuries done to one another our angry feelings may have been let off and exhausted. In respect to the question at issue we remain in the same condition as before the war, unless indeed our opponent has been weaker, or his courage less than ours. We form a treaty at the last; perhaps we establish our rights, perhaps we suffer the question concerning them to be passed over in silence. Sometimes the conclusion of the whole matter is only this: we will quarrel no more about these matters for the present.

But let us suppose that the decision of a disputed question between two nations did, through necessity, require the sacrifice of life which war occasions; let it be supposed that the angry feelings which impede its decision required blood in order to be appeased; would not any way of destroying life be preferable to that of war? I can imagine that in some nations, not called civilized,—that among the inhabitants of some distant climes, or distant planets,—war has been held to be too insane an expedient to be adopted by thinking minds. In case disputed questions arise which baffle the wisdom or the cunning of the great governors of nations, a thousand men are drawn out by lot from each differing nation to be put to death with all the pomp of solemn and religious service. A day of national mourning in such country is appointed. The idle, the unemployed, are invited to present themselves as victims.

They are to be fed and clothed, even with elegance, at the public expense, before the day of sacrifice approaches. It is counted by many to be glorious to die for the public good, and many of the great and noble, the useful, the wise, and the young and promising contend for the honor of being sacrificed the first or the last, as an atonement for the angry feelings which the nation bears its opponents. If the number of victims is not filled by the appointed time, individuals are drawn by lot from the community at large to supply the deficiency, or they are taken by violence and compelled to be victims in the solemn offering which is to be made. When the time has fully arrived, the priests, to whom in some lands human sacrifice is an established service, are called forth, and they slay the destined individuals. The rulers of the land issue proclamation that the work is accomplished; great men are appointed to hold conversation with others of the differing nation; a decision is made, and the people of the two nations return to their accustomed pursuits. Such a project seems absurd; yet the sacrifice would be small compared to that which war occasions among civilized nations. The end of war is equally well answered by the plan which we have sketched, while all its demoralizing consequences are avoided.

It would be foolish, indeed, to call upon the people of this country to unite in any similar plan with a foreign nation for the settlement of differences. But it is scarcely possible to imagine that the passions of men could invent a contrivance more absurd than war. If war is a wise expedient, if it is a necessary expedient, duelling is equally wise and necessary. Some men of distinction in this country are even now so blinded by the force of fashion or custom and of public opinion, as to believe that in certain circumstances duels cannot be avoided. And how can they be, if war cannot be? Or rather, why may we not avoid national wars by the same reason through which we have learned to condemn the private duel as absurd?

Let us use the period of peace to impress upon our minds this sentiment,—that while we intrust to a few individuals, who desire it at our hands, the care of our public interests, it is the height of folly in them to confess that they have not the skill to save the public affairs from the confusion of a war, and it will be the highest

crime of which they can be guilty, if they have the prudence which their situation demands, to consent that war shall ever be declared. When war becomes inevitable, let them resign their places to their country to be filled by wiser men. E. B.

THE SILVER TANKARD.

On a slope of land opening itself to the south, in a now thickly settled town in the state of Maine, some hundred and more years ago stood a farm-house to which the epithet "comfortable" might be applied. The old forest came down to the back of it; in front were cultivated fields, beyond which was ground partially cleared, full of pine stumps, and here and there, standing erect, the giant trunks of trees which the fire had scorched and blackened, though it had failed to overthrow them. The house stood at the very verge of settlement, so that from it no other cottage could be seen; the nearest neighbour was distant about six miles. Daniel Gordon, the owner and occupant of the premises we have described, had chosen this valley in the wilderness, a wide, rich tract of land, not only as his own home, but, prospectively, as the home of his children and his children's children. He was willing to be far off from men, that his children might have room to settle around him. He was looked upon as the rich man of that district, well known over all that part of the country. His house was completely finished, and was large for the times, having two stories in front and one behind, with a long sloping roof; it seemed as if it leaned to the south, to offer its back to the cold winds from the northern mountains. It was full of the comforts of life,—the furniture even a little "showy" for a Puritan; and when the table was set, there was, to use a Yankee phrase, "considerable" silver plate, among which a large tankard stood preeminent. This silver had been the property of his father, and was brought over from the mother country.

Now, we will go back to this pleasant valley as it was on a bright and beautiful morning in the month of June. It was Sun-

day, and though early, the two sons of Daniel Gordon and the hired man had gone to meeting, on foot, down to the "Landing," a little village on the banks of the river, ten miles distant. Daniel himself was standing at the door, with the horse and chaise, ready and waiting for his good wife who had been somewhat detained; for even then, in those primitive times, the women would be a little backward,—for the last word or the last house-keeping duty. He was standing at the door-step, enjoying the freshness of the morning, with a little pride in his heart perhaps, as he cast his eye over the extent of his possessions spread before him. At that instant a neighbour, of six miles' distance, rode up on horseback and beckoned to him from the gate of the enclosure around the house.

"Good morning, neighbour Gordon," said he, "I have come out of my way in going to meeting to tell you that Tom Smith—that daring thief—with two others, has been seen prowling about in these parts, and that you'd better look out, lest you have a visit. I have got nothing in my house to bring them there, but they may be after the silver tankard, neighbour, and the silver spoons. I have often told you that these things were not fit for these new parts. Tom is a bold fellow, but I suppose the fewer he meets when he goes to steal, the better. I don't think it safe for you all to be off to meeting to-day;—but I am in a hurry, neighbour, so good bye."

This communication placed our friend Daniel in an unpleasant dilemma. It had been settled that no one was to be left at home but his daughter Mehitable, a beautiful little girl, about nine years old. Shall I stay or go, was the question. Daniel was a Puritan; he had strict notions of the duty of worshipping God in His temple, and he had faith that God would bless him only as he did his duty; but then he was a father, and little Hitty was the light and joy of his eyes.

But these Puritans were stern and unflinching. He soon settled the point. 'I won't even take Hitty with me, for t'will make her cowardly. The thieves may not come,—neighbour Perkins may be mistaken; and if they do come to my house, they will not hurt that child. At any rate she is in God's hands, and we will go to worship Him who never forsakes those who put their trust in

Him.' As he settled this, the little girl and her mother came out; the mother stepped in the chaise; the father after her, saying to the child, "If any strangers come, Hitty, treat them well. We can spare of our abundance to the poor. What is silver or gold when we think of God's holy word?" With these words on his lips he drove off,—a troubled man in spite of his religious trust, because he left his daughter in the wilderness alone.

Little Hitty, as the daughter of a Puritan, was strictly brought up to observe the Lord's day. She knew that she ought to return to the house; but nature for this once at least got the better of her training. 'No harm,' thought she, 'for me to see the brood of chickens.' Nor did she, when she had given them some water, go into the house; but loitered and lingered, hearing the robin sing, and following with her eye the bobo'lincoln as he flitted from shrub to shrub. She passed almost an hour out of the house because she did not want to be alone, and she did not feel alone when she was out among the birds and was gathering here and there a little wild flower. But at last she went in, took her Bible, and seated herself at the window, sometimes reading and sometimes looking out.

As she was there seated she saw three men coming up towards the house, and she was right glad to see them; for she felt lonely, and there was a dreary long day before her. 'Father,' thought she, 'meant something when he told me to be kind to strangers. I suppose he expected them. I wonder what keeps them all from meeting. Never mind; they shall see I can do something for them, if I am little Hitty.' So putting down the Bible she ran to meet them, happy, confiding, and even glad that they had come; and without waiting for them to speak, she called to them to come in with her, and said, "I am all alone; if mother was here she would do more for you, but I will do all I can;"—and all this with a frank, loving heart, glad to do good to others, and glad to please her father whose last words were,—to spare of their abundance to the weary traveller.

Smith and his two companions entered. Now it was neither breakfast time nor dinner time, but about half way between both; yet little Hitty's head was full of the direction, "spare of our abundance;" and almost before they were fairly in the house, she asked if she should get them something to eat. Smith replied,

"Yes, I will thank you, my child, for we are all hungry." This was indeed a civil speech for the thief, who half starved had been lurking in the woods to watch his chance to steal the "silver tankard" as soon as the "men folks" had gone to meeting. "Shall I give you cold victuals, or will you wait till I can cook some meat;" asked Hitty. "We can't wait," was the reply, "give us what you have ready as soon as you can." "I am glad you don't want me to cook for you,—but I would do it if you did,—because father would rather not have much cooking on Sundays." Then away she tripped about making her preparation for their repast. Smith himself helped her out with the table. She spread upon it a clean white cloth, and placed upon it the silver spoons and the silver tankard full of the "old orchard," with a large quantity of wheaten bread and a dish of cold meat. I don't know why the silver spoons were put on,—perhaps little Hitty thought they made the table look prettier. After all was done, she turned to Smith and with a courtesy told him that dinner was ready.

The child had been so busy in arranging her table, and so thoughtful of her housewifery, that she took little or no notice of the appearance and manners of her guests. She did the work as cheerily and freely, and was as unembarrassed, as if she had been surrounded by her father and mother and brothers. One of the thieves sat down doggedly, with his hands on his knees and his face down almost to his hands, looking all the time on the floor. Another, a younger and better looking man, stood confused and irresolute, as if he had not been well brcken in to his trade, and often would he go to the window and look out, keeping his back to the child. Smith on the other hand looked unconcerned, as if he had quite forgotten his purpose. He never once took his attention off the child, following her with his eye as she bustled about in arranging the dinner table; there was even a half smile on his face. They all moved to the table, Smith's chair at the head, one of his companions on each side, the child at the foot, standing there to help her guests and to be ready to go for further supplies as there was need.

The men ate as hungry men, almost in silence, drinking occasionally from the silver tankard. When they had done, Smith started up suddenly, and said, "Come! let's go." "What!"

exclaimed the older robber, "go with empty hands when this silver is here." He seized the tankard. "Put that down," shouted Smith; "I'll shoot the man who takes a single thing from this house!" Poor Hitty at once awaked to a sense of the character of her guests; with terror in her face and yet with a child-like frankness she ran to Smith, took hold of his hand, and looked into his face as if she felt sure that *he* would take care of her.

The old thief, looking to his young companion and finding that he was ready to give up the job, and seeing that Smith was resolute, put down the tankard, growling like a dog which has had a bone taken from him—"fool! catch me in your company again,"—and with such expressions left the house, followed by the other. Smith put his hand on the head of the child and said, "Don't be afraid—stay quiet in the house—nobody shall hurt you." Thus ended the visit of the thieves; thus God preserved the property of those who had put their trust in Him. What a story had the child to tell when the family came home! How hearty was the thanksgiving that went up that evening from the family altar!

A year or two after this poor Tom Smith was arrested for the commission of some crime, was tried, and condemned to be executed. Daniel Gordon heard of this, and that he was confined in jail in the seaport town to wait for the dreadful day when he was to be hung up as a dog between heaven and earth. Gordon could not keep away from him; he felt drawn to the protection of his daughter, and went down to see him. When he entered the dungeon, Smith was seated, his face was pale, his hair tangled and matted together,—for why should he care for his looks; there was no other expression in his countenance, than that of irritation from being intruded upon, when he wanted to hear nothing, see nothing, more of his *brother* man; he did not rise, nor even look up, nor return the salutation of Gordon, who continued to stand before him. At last, as if wearied beyond endeavour he asked, "What do you want of me? Can't you let me alone even here?"

"I come," said Gordon, "to see you, because my daughter told me all you did for her when you ———."

As if touched to the heart, Smith's whole appearance changed, an expression of deep interest came over his features, he was

altogether another man. The sullen indifference passed away in an instant. "Are you the father of that little girl? Oh what a dear child she is! Is she well and happy? How I love to think of her! That's one pleasant thing I have to think of. For once I was treated like other men. Could I kiss her once, I think I should feel happier." In this hurried manner he poured out an intensity of feeling little supposed to lie in the bosom of a condemned felon.

Gordon remained with Smith, whispered to him of peace beyond the grave for the penitent, smoothed in some degree his passage through the dark valley, and did not return to his family until Christian love could do no more for an erring brother, on whom scarcely before had the eye of love rested, whose hand had been against all men because their hands had been against him.

I have told the story more at length and interwoven some unimportant circumstances, but it is before you substantially as it was related to me. The main incidents are true, though, doubtless, as the story has been handed down from generation to generation it has been colored by the imagination. The silver tankard as an heir loom has descended in the family—the property of the daughter named *Mehitable*, and is now in the possession of the lady of a clergyman in Massachusetts.

What a crowd of thoughts do these incidents cause to rush in upon the mind! How sure is the overcoming of evil with good. How truly did Jesus Christ know what is in the heart of man. How true to the best feelings of human nature are even the outcasts of society. How much of our virtue do we owe to our position among men. How inconsistent with Christian love is it to put to death our brother, whose crimes arise mainly from the vices and wrong structure of society. How incessant should be our exertions to disseminate the truth, that the world may be reformed, and the law of love be substituted for the law of peace. The reader will not however need our help to make the right use of the guarding of the "silver tankard" by the kindness and innocence of a child.

S. E. C.

LINES IN MEMORY OF THE LATE JOSEPH
BLANCO WHITE.

We have already spoken of the life and death of this "wise and noble" man. A late number of the *Monthly Repository* contains some lines to his memory, which we infer from the signature were written by the incumbent of the ministry-at-large in Liverpool, Rev. Mr. Johns. We copy (what seems to us) the best, as well as the larger, portion of them.

On wise and noble Old Man, art thou gone?
Are thy long sufferings in this sharp world done?
Has the parch'd hart found out the restful spring,
The stricken sun-bird furl'd his bleeding wing,
The worn bark struck upon the gentle shore,
Where clouds o'ershade and tempests wreck no more?
Yes, all is over with the last meek breath,
The beautiful of life is fix'd in death,
And lips that breath'd to falter praise through pain,
Are clos'd in peace, no pain shall break again.
Thy ministry of glorious sorrows pass'd,
The earthquake, death, hath rent the veil at last,
And now the martyr rests within the shrine
Where full Divinity makes all divine.

There are some men, who, while they sojourn here,
Like fabled birds of Paradise, appear
To glide in light through thought's and fancy's bowers,
Gleaming through glooms that teem with secret flowers,
Less as inhabitants than stranger-guests,
Whose wing ne'er darkens and whose foot ne'er rests.
And some such lot, oh wise Old Man, was thine,
So did the bright wings of thy spirit shine
Through shades of error, and o'er truth's dim blooms,
World-hid, to thee reveal'd by their perfumes,
O'er which, fond-hovering on thy mystic way,
Thy presence shed strange visitings of day.
Alas, how true, "the world but loves its own!"
Unworldly spirits, 'midst the worldly thrown,
How poorly priz'd, how dimly understood,
Though best and wisest of the wise and good,
Though their whole lives but to one object tend—

By man-befriending to make God their Friend !
 And such was thine. But, though the many knew
 Nought of thy love for them—and the weak drew
 Off from thy side—and some few nameless darts,
 Dipp'd in the venom of unchristian hearts,
 Struck on thy mail, sometimes a scratch-way found,
 And caus'd a pang, even when they fail'd to wound,—
 Yea, though this were, or might be, yet we now
 May think, Old Man, how fortunate wert thou,
 That love, deep love, was round thee to the end,
 That thou, the friend of all, hadst many a friend,
 Proud to learn patience at thy suffering side,
 And by thy trials to be more than tried !
 Happiest in this, that, where fond friendship shed
 Its evening light on Roscoe's silver'd head,
 There WHITE retir'd, forgot the painful past,
 Found a sweet home in which to die at last,
 Saw a son's place by one as dear supplied,
 And under RATHBONE's roof more calmly died.

These are the men—some future sage will say,
 Feeding on thoughts that long survive all clay—
 These are the men that wake communions high,
 With Beauty, Power, Truth, and Eternity ;
 From whom, as from some never-sounded well,
 (Dusk with sheer depth, yet clear as icicle
 Harden'd upon the snowdrop) as we drink,
 We learn not nakedly to feel or think,
 But feelingly to think, thoughtfully feel,
 Watching with patient passion the vast wheel,
 Whose axle turns within the mind, whose bound
 No eye—saint, sage, or seraph's—yet hath found ;
 But from whose spokes, as each on each they rise,
 Flash such revealings o'er men's destinies,
 That they who keep these glorious vigils, shun,
 As of less worth, the pale material sun.
 Thus transmigrating into their high thought,
 And to a subtler element upwrought,
 Like ermines, gathering spotlessness from snow,
 Our souls tread light and whiten as they go.

POPULAR FICTION.

THE present age is overflowed with novels : not that multitudes read them, but multitudes write them. If a merchant is bankrupt, he writes a novel ; if a lawyer is briefless, he spins out a fictitious suit in his weary leisure, and twaddles his slow tale along, as if his *Ten Thousand a Year* should crawl through ten thousand pages ; if a captain in the navy or the army can no longer "seek the bubble reputation in the cannon's mouth," he seeks a safer glory through the press,—wields the pen instead of the sword, sheds ink for blood, spreads out battles and campaigns on the virgin sheet, and fights and conquers again and again. In the mean time thousands watch for the new tale, or the next fragment of it, with a sickly hunger, and morbid curiosity pants from mouth to mouth, marking the interval of the year by the progress of some 'series,' of which when the author has given one instalment, he trusts for the next to the future and good luck.

A few observations here upon fiction we do not, therefore, consider out of place or out of season.

Some persons, we believe, would banish fiction altogether, as useless and a vanity. We would not do this. We do not consider fiction in itself a vanity : and yet we cannot produce any defence of it, which would satisfy objectors ; we cannot satisfy the austerity of one class, or the narrow materiality of another. If some will not allow any thing to be good except it have the gravity of a sermon, and others see value in nothing that transcends the senses, we know of no arguments to justify fiction, and we know of none to justify sculpture, painting, poetry, and music. Some will regard these things as sin, and others as nonsense. A class of men there is,—a small one it is to be hoped,—who give no value or reality to any thing, if it cannot bring profit or indulgence, if it cannot feed an appetite or fill a purse. There are those doubtless, to whom a ledger is more impressive than *Paradise Lost* ; there are even those to whom a Cooking-book is more exciting than *Don Quixote* ; to the one Rothschild is a more solemn impersonation of human nature than Milton, and to the other Doctor Kitchener a greater artist than Cervantes. Literature is nothing to such men ; it hath

not capital, it hath not bank stock ; it hath no skill in interest upon interest ; it hath no credit upon 'change.

It is not that men of this order limit the circle of utility ; but within the sphere to which they confine it, they poorly comprehend its purport. The man who can trace a principle to its higher relations, is he who also best understands its humble uses. The worldling who is skilful only to amass wealth, is commonly one to whom the noblest applications of that wealth are lost. We constantly observe persons who have accumulated princely fortunes, unable to extract from them an ordinary amount of happiness. Wealth can give fine apparel, but not grace to the wearer ; and luxurious feasts, but not dignity to the eaters ; banquets it can spread, where neither heart nor hospitality presides, where wine is abundant but wit and wisdom scarce, from which, fatigued with much eating and little thought, the guests retire to nightmare and the gout.

The utility of those arts which affect the imagination or excite the sense of beauty, does not consist in always contemplating a specified end. We cannot regard a tree as painters or as poets in the same instant in which we look on it with the eye of a carpenter. Its graceful shadow in the lake, its majestic form stately in the dignity of years claiming long kindred with earth and sky, its foliage of a thousand hues dancing in the sun, suggest no dream of loveliness, if we are gauging its trunk to ascertain whether it will best suit for shingles or churn-staves. The grandest objects, it is true, have most familiar uses, and even in these uses they do not lose their beauty ; neither do they cease to be useful, when we see them in a beauty which is not practical, but ideal. The sun is not mere light for labor, but is good also for the gladness and the glory which it gives to life. The moon-beams that sleep upon the hill are good in their very sweetness and silence ; and the stars in the wide wilderness of night had value when commerce or political economy was not, when yet the Chaldean shepherd gazed upon them from his fenceless plain. The virgin river in its stillness, or the lonely cataract in its foam, was not a void in nature ere a single cotton-mill had flung a broad shadow on the waters. As it is with objects, so it is with sentiments to which this relation of objects belongs. The good which waits on their culture is not one

definable and measurable, neither is it one of will and forethought. It comes without seeking, and it grows without consciousness. It is a spirit of life, and not a thing of calculation.

The utility, then, of fiction, like that of all the fine arts, is not one of objective and palpable profit, but of silent and unbidden influence. Fiction is useful when it exalts, enlarges, and purifies our imagination; when it secures our appreciation for the just, the gentle, the holy, and the heroic; when it quickens our sympathies without corrupting them, and stimulates our interest without intoxicating us. On the other hand, it is pernicious when it feeds our fancies with the noxious garbage of impure or morbid minds; when it generates fantastic desires; when it is untrue to nature, and only distorts where it attempts to describe; when dishonoring conscience, it confuses moral distinctions, beclouds the beauty of virtue, and begirds vice with a deceiving lustre; when it undermines sound principles, while it trains capricious sensibilities; when instead of giving a charm to repose, it stirs up disgust for labor; when instead of cheering actual life with the light of ideal beauty, it makes it an opium dream, and fills it with figures of drunken wildness, or darkens it with forms of gross or grotesque deformity. Such we think is much of the wretched nonsense which is now dignified by the name of fiction,—the shame of genius, and the disgrace of literature.

The love of fiction has its foundation in our nature, and a most delightful instinct it is, when well developed, and rightly cultivated. We may say of fiction generally what Scott said of the *Vicar of Wakefield*, that we read it in childhood, and we return to it in age; and commonly too, our age returns to the works our childhood loved. There is a transition in the interval. Faith and wonder are our first emotions; fact and passion then succeed; but when fact is worn, and passion sobered, faith and wonder come again. The world of spirits is our first world; marvels are our earliest facts; the fabulist is our historian. What a world to youth is that, if youth is not spoiled or degraded; if the day of life is not curtailed of its blessed morning by the toil of poverty, or the precocity of stimulated worldliness. What fulness of trust and truth in the soul! What fulness in the universe, of loveliness and bliss! What shall we have in the first years of existence

better than the fancy and the faith of childhood?—Who wishes to be a child again—but who is not glad at memories that childhood has left behind? Among those memories who does not often recal the marvels which gave a charmed life to his early imagination? Who does not often look back from the labors of manhood or the repose of age on those hallowed enchantments of the fancy, which though never to be regained are always to be remembered? In the opening of thought we have not one world, but many worlds. These worlds, too, have their inhabitants,—their chronicles, their mighty princes, their revolutions, their high deeds, and their heroic souls. The *Arabian Nights* is then our Vade Mecum; “Sinbad” a greater navigator than Captain Cook, and “Aladdin with the wonderful lamp” a more exalted character than Sir Humphrey Davy with the safety lamp. Endless the delight and drollery which these glowing pages give us, while yet we read them in the light of an unclouded and believing fancy. Then, too, are the Fairy tales, a mythology of life and beauty, which secured our childhood’s belief—when yet children were not critics and philosophers, theologians or politicians—when yet the world of fact did not in the very morning of existence swallow up the world of fancy. Things are fast changing. In the breast even of youth worldly passion and pursuits are active in Lilliputian strife; and much of our exceedingly *wisecacre* education fosters this development. Urchins are political, and discuss the doctrines of Whiggery and Toryism; they are miniature speculators, and debate the merits of the banking system. Pure and ideal fancy is pushed out of life for coarse prose and coarser passion. The change, we conceive, is not for the better: not for happiness, not for virtue: not even for intellect. We remember when children had enthusiasm, and when they spent it on congenial objects; when they would steal out to silence and sunshine, to feast over the wonders of Fairy land,—in lonely and pleasant scenery, where Puck might have played his pranks, or Queen Mab have held her court, her revels and her routs. They read the story of Bunyan’s *Pilgrim* then with devouring pleasure; entered heartily into his trials; grieved with him as he left his home; walked with him over the weary wilderness of his travels; listened to his converse of quaint and simple melody; trembled for his dangers, and again became tranquil at

his escapes; rested with him at "the Interpreter's" house; beguiled the night with him and his entertainers; and when at last he arrives at "the Beautiful City," they turned back from their gentle companion, rejoiced in spirit that his labors and his journey were closed in heavenly repose. To the true temper of youth *The Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*, also, are ever delightful; that tale of wildest romance, the boy's own story, so marvellous, yet so simple, so heartfelt, so passing strange in incident, yet so human in sympathy, so practical and so pure in sentiment. As youth is passing into manhood, Cervantes meets us on the line that divides romance from reality; standing between two eras of life, the vapour-images of fancy receding, but not yet dissolved by the coming sun of experience—turning towards our childhood partly in irony and partly in love—half in doubt and half in earnest, we are grave and glad through the pages of *Don Quixote*. We laugh at the knight in his solemn folly, yet we are not without a glimmer of his fine human wisdom; but Sancho is entirely our sport, in imagination we join the carriers, and toss him right merrily in a blanket.

Here the full and fresh enjoyment of the romance may be said to close, and the period of the novel to commence. We cease to wonder, and we begin to feel. Our active nature becomes more complicated; and we lay hold upon the real world by numberless impulsions. Life deepens its energies in force of action and intensity of emotion. The novel therefore embodies in vivid incidents and pictures the yearnings and desires of this epoch. Love, of consequence, is the spirit and the life of the novel; all else becomes subordinate and subservient. Although in ordinary description this has a sad monotony—a monotony which it requires the very highest genius to break, it lives and must ever live in everlasting sympathy. The common-places of such passions to those who have lost interest in them are, no doubt, intolerable; but to those who are yet ready to thrill at every touch, they are links of fire. An iron rod can conduct lightning from the skies; but the lightnings which fall dead upon an iceberg kindle the forest to a flame. A story of incidents dull to the trodden heart, is often a medium of most burning fancies to the unsophisticated nature. But such a tale is not the cause, it is the occasion; and the emotions which attend the perusal it does not inspire, but excite. The truth is,

that in no other department of literature is there so beaten a uniformity, as in that of novels,—so much inveterate and insufferable trash. There is nothing which at all requires the capacity of invention, that has so little diversity, so hopeless a cant, so stolid a spirit of imitation, as the ordinary novel. A legal argument may be heavy, a prosy sermon may be dull, but no plea can be heavier, and no sermon duller, than the plot and machinery of a novel after the common fashion.

Some novels in the last century had extraordinary power, but those most remarkable for power were as little distinguished for purity. Fielding brought the novel to the perfection of the epic; but his art is certainly more to be commended than his morals. Yet Fielding was honest; he intended no injury to virtue, or rather he did not think about virtue one way or the other. He describes life and manners as they were, and in his day life was reckless and manners were coarse. He took things as they were, and he did not profess to make them better; they were low, and he does not elevate them. The more thoroughly he keeps to objects as he saw them, the more admirably he writes, and fails only when he quits this circle of reality. Allworthy is a burlesque upon beneficence; Blifil is a fiend, and Black George is a brute; but 'Squire Western is true to his time and class, Tom Jones is a person of kindly temper, though of profligate habits, and Sophia is a hoidenish country girl of romantic notions and neglected education. These in their pictures by the novelist are no more than what they would seem in the world, and we may judge them in the book as we would in society. True, they may be no very desirable acquaintances in either, but if we throw ourselves into their company, though it is quite possible they may corrupt us, they cannot deceive us. The author does not want them to pass for better than they are; he dazzles us with no false lights; he shrouds their characters in no mystic phraseology; he pronounces no judgment in their favour; he interferes with none of our moral distinctions; if we think his personages are far from righteousness, he says nothing to the contrary. In this age of sentimentalism it is otherwise. Pickpockets now court our commiseration, and house-breakers move our tears; they enter a sleeping chamber so delicately, we regret that such elegance is lost to polite society, and

they murder a friend with so many pangs, that we think under better training they would have been high in the scale of philanthropy. Tom Jones in these days would have been another sort of person from what Fielding made him. Instead of being a harum-scarum as he was, he would have been a man of fashion, or a man of study, or an incarnation of them both, refined, melancholy, meditative; he would think much on the problems of life, on the existence of evil; like a second Hamlet, he would muse profoundly on the mysteries of destiny, and rave most eloquently on the paradoxes of the world, and the ironies of life; gloom would often gather over his soul labouring amidst mighty speculations, and a noble discontent agitate his spirit, as it struggled against the barriers that hedged its infinitude; though vicious and a profligate, his vices would be embellished by sentiment, and his profligacy would be dignified by philosophy. If Fielding is coarse, he is at least candid: and his coarseness moreover is redeemed by the art of a master, the learning of a scholar, and a stout, Saxon style; by most truthful pictures of English manners and English life; by natural and vivid incidents; and by characters of rare and powerful creation.

Richardson was a good man and a great genius. His novels, though tedious, are full of ability. He proposed to advance the cause of virtue; yet his stories are more dangerous by their sentiment, than those of Fielding are by their simplicity.—Mackenzie is a poor dilution of this school; his *Man of the World* is a fool, and his *Man of Feeling* a respectable vegetable, a walking sensitive plant.—Then we have Goldsmith, worth Mackenzies ten thousand times told. Who shall ever forget his *Vicar*,—his vicar dear to every heart, beloved in every tongue, gentle in prosperity, sublime in adversity? Who does not revere his ‘monogamy,’ and admire the zeal of his defence, the nearest approach to anger that ever ruffled his meek and Christian spirit? Mrs. Primrose is immortal, with her gooseberry wine; and so is Moses, with his bag of green-cased spectacles.—What a contrast to this delightful tale we have in the works of Smollet. With the vigor of Fielding and the wit of Swift, they are yet so defiled with indecency, so utterly void of any high principle, that disgust is fast hurrying them to oblivion. This is the just penalty which humanity inflicts on genius that

despises all its nobler laws. Ribald humor may make the ground-lings of the hour laugh, but with the hour the buffoonery expires; it is only good and generous qualities that exist forever.

Scott came, and the shadows of the old school vanished from his light. What a name is Scott in the nineteenth century! He was called the wizard, but not well; he was not a wizard who invoked phantoms, that come noiseless in the night and vanish when the sun arises: he was a creator who gave our fancy worlds that will not dissolve, and our feelings objects that will not die. How bright too are those worlds, and how populous; what solemn and jocund sounds within them; what noble and what merry denizens; what mixings of laughing and lamentation; what movement of characters and incidents; what throbbings of action and of passion. If we try to call up any of his works, how full and living the brain becomes:—*Waverly*, with its border feuds and Highland clans, and Flora McIvor rising through the storm in her majesty: *Ivanhoe*, with its pomp of chivalry, Cedric in his Saxon independence, and Rebecca, sublime in religion and loveliness: *Old Mortality*, with its Covenanters and Cavaliers in the stern strife of principles and passions—loyalty to conscience against loyalty to kings—Balfour and Bothwell—McBriar and Claverhouse: *The Antiquary*; Monkbarns there with his loving pedantry and his “womankind,” and Edie Ochiltree, the glory and the joy of beggary: *The Bride of Lammer Muir*, with the shadows of fate darkening over the brave and the beautiful; the proud and lonely Ravenswood, the meek and gentle Lucy Ashton, the dreariness not relieved but deepened by the sorrowful inventiveness of Caleb Baldestone. Throughout the whole of these marvellous creations the interest is healthy and human, the laugh is hearty, and the tear is pure; and virtue goes hand in hand with admiration,—in every condition genuine, in the lowly heroism of Jeanie Deans, as in the high and queenly purity of Die Vernon.

Scott is gone: but these worlds of his endure. Scott is gone, but we have Bulwer. The natural and the artificial could never stand in stronger contrast. The one teemed with humanity as God made it, the other is learned in the corrupt fashions of it which society has deformed. Bulwer is a man of genius, if it require genius always to substitute the affected for the true, and make the

affected popular; if it require genius, not only to deal in affectation, but in the most utter perversion of moral humanity, yet persuade numbers to think it greatness or beauty; if to effect all this require genius, Bulwer has genius of no ordinary power. One of his heroes makes a philosophical theory for murder, and carries his theory into execution; but he is notwithstanding exceedingly generous, and exceedingly humane. Passing over *Paul Clifford* and *Pelham*, both very distinguished in their way, we come to two of Bulwer's later heroes. *Ernest Maltravers* is a character which we wonder any can contemplate without insufferable disgust, or any man could have created while a spark of reverence remained for virtue in his soul. Ernest closes his youth, and commences his manhood with badness and baseness of heart; he robs an ignorant creature of innocence whom he never intends to marry, whom he wilfully marks for infamy. Profligate and pedant, he runs his course of absurd impossibilities, spinning out bombastic disquisitions, writhing with galvanic emotion, twaddling a puerile sensibility; until the circle of contortions is completed in meeting the victim of his first selfishness, from whom he hears an episode of arrant nonsense; and the outrage upon common sense is finished by a marriage, which at last is one more of accident than affection. Phillip Moreton, the hopeful hero of *Night and Morning*, is the son of a man who broke his neck, when he was on the point of avowing a private marriage which he had concealed for years. To find out this marriage is the object of Phillip's life, and his success is the catastrophe of the story. In the pursuit he gets his probation for manhood amongst thieves and grooms, yet comes at last to be a great heir and a finished gentleman. Bulwer's heroines are the proper counterparts of his heroes. Those of the two latter stories are rather odd specimens of womanhood; Alice has no idea of guilt when Ernest first meets her, and Mrs. Moreton endures for long years the appearance of vice, when she knows that her selfish husband keeps the evidence of her virtue in concealment. The influence of Bulwer's characters would be most pernicious, if they had somewhat more the semblance of real men or women to stamp them with interest: but they are so much the mere phantasmagoria of a heated brain, and have so little of heart in them, bad or good, that they pass away with the fumes

they excite. Still Bulwer is largely culpable before his species; culpable for the abuse of very noble faculties, in a way for which these faculties themselves are no compensation. Evil is done, and good omitted, for which there is not satisfaction, but sorrow, in his piercing intellect, his brilliant fancy, his social sagacity, his splendour of painting, and his most masterly rhetoric.

Harrison Ainsworth, with a capacity equal to the higher regions of romance, has chosen to delve into dens of thieves for heroes, and to seek the gallows and the gibbet for the scenery of his catastrophes. He has chosen in one instance to degrade genius, defile literature, and insult morals, by writing the basest book—*Jack Sheppard*—which in recent times has desecrated the name of fiction. This is saying much when *The Poacher* is its cotemporary.—Maryatt, never refined, has in *The Poacher* outdone even himself in grossness; never remarkable for wisdom, he has here perpetrated the most grotesque fabrication of absurdity that has yet claimed his paternity.—*Ten Thousand a Year* is another of these productions, which does no honor to our literature. It is not without ability, but its spirit is most unworthy—a spirit of scorn against the middle classes of England, and of slavish adulation to the higher. Fate, however, has played the author false, in placing his birth in the class that he ridicules. He is, we understand, the son of a Mr. Warren, late a Methodist preacher but now a minister of the Established Church. He is the author of a series of sketches called *Selections from the Diary of a Late Physician*, distinguished by a sort of coarse and convulsive power. This writer wants the high genius which can create, or the noble art which can beautify, but when he surrounds his morbid fancy with the horrors of human nature, he has a galvanic energy which gives them the mockery of reality. His tedious volumes, worthless for morals, are equally worthless for literature.

In this prostitution of talent and degradation of letters, it is pleasant to look to one man who is true to his kind, to his mission, and to himself. Mr. Dickens has taken humble life for the sphere of his vocation. He describes poverty, but it is the poverty of men, and not of Calibans. He harrows the very soul with the realities of crime and misery; but because they are *realities*, and

that he makes us feel them to be such, the horror that startles, improves us. And then withal there are so many lights of beauty, so many fine touches of tenderness, so many gleams of sweetness falling on the lowly, so much of all that is good and lovely in the rudest places to which he conducts us, that we bless the Father of men who surrounds the worst estates with cheering compensations. Dickens always strengthens our virtue, confirms our religion, and enlarges our charities. We easily perceive that he has faults, but we forgive them all, for his genial cheerfulness, his benignant humor, his loving drollery, and his unfailing sympathies. We pay the tribute of admiration to his genius, but his humanity attracts our affection without effort and without bidding.

In closing this paper, the impression is sad rather than otherwise ;—sad, that a state of society should exist in England to furnish such degraded pictures of men and manners as now teem from the press ; sad, that men of letters should stoop to be such mental scavengers as to gather up this fermented filth ; sad, that there should be a public to relish and to devour it. The sign is bad for morals as for taste ; the desire is evil, and the ministry to it renders it progressively worse ; the product of corruption reacts back on it, and makes the canker from which it comes more festered. But our regret is not merely for England, but for this country also, to which this vile stuff is constantly imported. It fills our newspapers ; it circulates through our land ; it is read by those who read nothing else ; it empisons the moral taste of our youth, and enfeebles their intellect. It is unsuited to our institutions, and it is not for our happiness. Every man here owes a solemn duty to society, for society gives him a solemn trust. To hold that trust as he ought, he needs a strong and simple character, the very last excellence which these noxious productions have a tendency to foster. If we cannot have an original literature, a literature manly and republican, independent in its spirit and independent in its growth—if we must import from older countries, let us bring something which is worth the carriage. Let us leave rank and ragged weeds to rot where they have sprung ; it is not worth crossing the Atlantic to transport them here to putrify.

H. G.

DEATH-BED REPENTANCE.

A SERMON, BY REV. GEORGE WHITNEY.

LUKE XV. 10. Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

There are two entirely opposite, and as it seems to me equally erroneous, opinions prevalent in relation to the efficacy of what is denominated a death-bed repentance; that is to say, a repentance at the close of life after having been miserably unfaithful to some one or many, it may be all, of its duties. By one of these it is regarded, in every instance, as fallacious and ineffectual, as extorted by the pains of sickness, the terrors of death, or the horrors of a coming retribution,—a matter of feeling or animal excitement, dwelling wholly upon the surface and sending no spiritual or sanctifying power to the soul; and therefore of no avail towards the attainment of everlasting felicity. We are told by those who pronounce this sweeping judgment, that repentance so exhibited in all the solemnities of a dying hour, when the soul is just winging its flight to the unknown regions of eternity, must be wanting, as incontestably it must in the sight of men, in the surest evidence of its sincerity and worth—a life corresponding to its resolutions and promises. Are not the rewards of the Gospel, say they, for such only as are faithful unto death? Are the gates of everlasting joy to be thrown open to the disciples of worldliness and mammon, forbidden indulgences and defiling sin? Is an hour of wishes, fair words and thoughts, to be given and accepted in exchange for a life of thoughtlessness and folly? Are we to go upward to God, and find him ready to receive and bless us, only when strength and the world have left us helpless and alone? Is this the doctrine to be held up to men to make them devout and holy, followers of Christ, and worthy of heaven?

This view is objectionable, because it is wild and declamatory, full of denunciation, and little in accordance with the plenteous mercy and lovingkindness of the Lord.

The other extreme to which this doctrine has been followed, has

given to the penitence of the last hour far more efficacy than to a holy life, and thrown around it much more glowing attractions. It has made the bare confession of guilt and the desire of heaven the sure passport to glory and happiness. It has represented the dying moments of the sinner as full of rapture, and strewed the passage of the soul from sin and shame to joy and everlasting honor with more than the decorations of a triumphal march. Scarcely the least, if any, notice has usually been taken of the violent circumstances by which the penitent is assailed, nor anything like a reasonable allowance made for their powerful influence. Almost the words alone, 'I believe and repent, may God have mercy on my soul,' have been set down as the measure of perfect holiness, and a sure title to forgiveness, acceptance and favour. So has it been with many an abandoned one, over whom the mistaken priest has reverently said his mass and broken the emblems of our Saviour's love. So has it been with many a murderer, by whose side the minister on the floor of the scaffold has lifted up holy hands, and proclaimed peace and pardon to his departing soul. Among the disciples of this delusion, under the false impression that the manner of death is in all cases the supreme concern, the earnest and anxious inquiry is oftentimes made, whether the person in question met his last hour calmly and tranquilly, at peace with himself and at peace with his Maker, perfectly resigned to the appointment of Heaven; thus overlooking the character of the life and making the serenity of dying everything. As if the most worthy were not sometimes fearful, and the most hardened known to be sometimes full of smiles and exultation.

This view of the subject is likewise equally as objectionable, if not more so than the former; for it seems to be blind or indifferent to the value of holiness and a well spent life. It makes acceptance and blessedness too much a matter of exchange for regrets and sighs and a few moments' feeling. It does not ascribe sufficient importance to the enduring nature of sin, and to the dependance of happiness upon the character.

It will be perceived, I trust, that these different modes of regarding the doctrine before us are essentially at variance with each other. In the one case it is totally rejected, in the other it is stamped with unspeakable value. Finding little sympathy with

either of these as they have been stated, my present purpose is to ascertain, how far he who has misimproved the life God has given him may by repentance at last find acceptance with his Judge ?

My first remark then is, that repentance, in any case and at all periods, in order to be acceptable must be sincere. It must be the heart's offering. No confession of words can reach it, unless those words are the expression of the deep feelings of the soul. I do not say, they must be the language of sorrow ; for that does not and cannot convey to us a full conception of the mental suffering which in an hour like this must be heaving the sinner's breast, like the smothered fires of the volcanic mountain. It must be the language of extreme distress, of self-upbraiding and the tortures of conscience. That repentance which is unto life must be all this. From the nature of man it is impossible that he should turn back to the paths of pleasantness and peace from the dismal road of sin, without feeling what base ingratitude it was, what a sacrifice of happiness, what a forgetfulness of himself and of his Father's love, ever to have wandered there. And our own experience teaches us that beyond all bodily torment is the reflection, to which we at last awake from a foolish or guilty course, that we have wilfully sold our own happiness, bartered it away for a pitiful indulgence, and with it offended against the tenderness and bounty of a generous Benefactor. To the penitent himself it is not too much to say, that his sincerity will be proved by his suffering. For us, in any given instance, to be sure of another's true repentance, we must witness the abandonment of his evil course—we must see that the remembrance of what he once was is goading him on like a sting—that he is ceasing to do evil and learning and loving to do well. But there is a higher power and a keener glance than ours, which can determine without the actions of the life whether the heart is only deceiving itself, or whether it be that true repentance which giveth joy in the presence of the angels of God.

Now I propose this simple question,—may not repentance be just as sincere, and therefore just as likely to be accepted, in the last hour of life as at any other ? I do not say that it always is so, for there is strong reason to fear that in many cases it is a heartless mockery—a superficial and hasty thing, and an impious trifling in the most solemn of all earthly scenes, on the most solemn of all

earthly subjects. But while all this is conceded, it cannot be denied, I think, that it may be, and oftentimes is, all that God's mercy requires to welcome back again the wandering child to the arms of his favour.

It may be objected, that it is a state produced by the pains of disease or the fear of dying. Be it so; nevertheless the repentance is accomplished. And shall we quarrel with the means that have been effectual in saving a soul from death,—that second death where the affections and principles and happiness are exposed to perish? Disease and death may be—undeniably they are—among the instruments God sees fit to employ to bring his more obdurate children to a knowledge of themselves and to the peaceful paths of everlasting truth. The last hour and approaching dissolution do but operate upon men like the other events of his Providence. There is in them nothing miraculous. They join with the warnings and promises that are forever uttering their voices, whether we heed them or not, to awaken the slumbering conscience, and to call us out of darkness into the bright realms of day. No one would think of doubting the efficacy of the repentance, if it were but sincere, which was brought about—as it oftentimes is—by the sudden death of a beloved friend, or by a narrow and marvellous escape from imminent destruction. If not, then why should we hesitate any more in the belief that it may prove the same in the last moments of human existence? To the praise of good resolutions, cases have occurred of those brought back penitent from the gates of the grave who by their lives have testified to the power of such a repentance.

In support of this opinion it must be admitted that any repentance, however late, must be more acceptable to a Being of infinite purity than a lasting obstinacy in sin. He who looks down, not with anger, but as a father pities his children, upon our ingratitude and sinful indulgences,—who would gladly stretch forth his arm to snatch us from the paths of folly, did he not confer upon us greater happiness in drawing us towards himself, as by the strong motives with which he wins us, so also by our own signal struggles,—cannot but rejoice, if we have been so forgetful of ourselves as to throw life and its joys away, that we have been wise enough to see and acknowledge the error and turn to him at last. His benevolence

must be enkindled to find his purposes accomplished in the increasing happiness of the creatures of his love. And since the sinner injures, not his Maker, but himself in every step by which he departs from him, in every moment he perverts to an unholy purpose, he whose mercy towards us knows no end will in no wise cast us out though we have but one step left to take towards him, and though the last moment be the only one that has been given to his service. Even this, poor as it is, is better than to die impenitent. Any real contrition of heart, we are led to believe, he will accept, if it be all the compensation it is in our power to make. This seems to me to be an indisputable inference from the character and attributes of God.

There is likewise another course, drawn from the language of our Saviour, which will bring us at last to the same result. We are told that Peter came to our Lord with the inquiry, how often the spirit of his religion would authorize the forgiveness of his offending brother. "Shall he sin against me, and I forgive him, until seven times?" Mark the answer he receives: "I say not unto thee, until seven times, but until seventy times seven;"—in other words there is to be no end or limit to your forgiveness. Accept him, whatever may be the multitude of his offences, whenever he returns to you in penitence. The application of this reply is direct to our subject. There is but a single step to it; for we have only to inquire,—are we or are we not to be more forgiving than our Maker? Is the creature to be more merciful and compassionate than the Creator who has formed him? The religion which Christ came to inculcate, was that which was to bring us nearer and nearer to the perfection of its Author. All which he taught was the teaching of his Father, who sent him; and if so, I see not, from this direction how the conclusion can be for an instant resisted, that his forgiveness is unbounded, and that at every hour, whether early or late, he bids us turn to him and live.

The more fully the inferences we make from the character of God are sustained by the Scriptures, the more satisfactory must they of course become, and I therefore add, in further confirmation of what I have already adduced, the touching instance of the dying malefactor at the hour of the crucifixion. He was brought to suffer at last an ignominious death in consequence of having trans-

gressed against the laws of his country. We are told that he was a thief; we are not acquainted with much of his previous life, except that he probably knew something of our Saviour and his preaching, inasmuch as he bore testimony to his innocence. Whatever may have been the influence of the fear of death or external circumstances on others, we are authorized to believe they were never more powerful than on him. His was virtually, though not in form, a death-bed repentance. And yet, because it was doubtless sincere, our Saviour pronounced him accepted. "Lord, remember me," says the dying penitent, "when thou comest into thy kingdom." "To-day," is the comforting reply he receives, "to-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." It cannot therefore be denied, that the Scriptures do furnish us with authority for the doctrine in question. They teach us that if we have deferred, all our lives long, the true knowledge of our duties and our happiness, we should defer them no longer; that if we have never before come to the knowledge of God and his truth, we had better come late than never; and that if we come in lowliness and humility, deep abasement and sincerity, with strong resolutions and contrite hearts, we shall then, as at all times, be accepted and forgiven.

In all that has been said I have not intimated—it ought not to be supposed that I would intimate—one word or thought to encourage the worldly to enter the paths of sin, or the abandoned to go on in them, under the idea that they shall at last forsake them, repent and be forgiven. Such an idea could only result from a misconception or narrow perversion of the doctrine, and a sadder misconception of virtue and the rewards it brings. Even if there were nothing else, who should not be deterred from an abuse of life and its privileges by the reflection, that perchance death might overtake him in a sudden and unexpected manner, or that disease with its host of acute pains might prostrate his reason before he could be spared time to repent? How often does death arrest men even on the way to the execution of a favorite project? How often does he follow on the track of insensibility and delirium? And when a long and wasting disease might be supposed to give time for reflection and penitence, how little is there after all favorable for such a work? Sickness, or the last and enfeebled hour of life, is no time to execute even worldly affairs with ease or to advantage; much

less is it any thing like a suitable season, under the best circumstances, to which to defer the everlasting interests of the soul.

But there is another and a stronger consideration than this. Though sincere repentance may find acceptance at last, let it be remembered that that portion of life which has been unimproved has been lost forever. There is no such thing as going back, and calling up the time that is past that it may be lived and acted over again. The Father of all mercies may receive the penitent to his favour and to the realms and fold of the blest, but he does not impart the joys of a well spent life, when life has been perverted, nor give to the conscience the satisfaction of having been void of offence, nor kindle within the bosom the spiritual pleasures of hard-earned virtue. The joys of heaven are the joys of character, not of place,—joys not given, but acquired. We deceive ourselves if we imagine, and we deceive others if we lead them to suppose, that happiness in the coming world, any more than in this which is passing away, can be conferred upon us like an earthly gift,—that the inheritance of the glorified spirit can be paid in as wealth is taken from the coffer and given for a legacy,—or that we can go unprepared and assume its splendors as the diadem is laid upon the head, and the regal purple upon the shoulders of kings. The Scriptures give not a shadow of encouragement to so vain a hope. They teach us that we are to make our own happiness in the virtuous exercise of the nature and capacities God has given us, that when we leave this world, we shall enter the next, bearing with us whatsoever burdens of knowledge and wisdom and piety we may have been wise enough to acquire. The dying penitent, or the penitent at any hour, is welcome and accepted, because he has renounced sin and its miserable bondage, and has come with the spirit of a disciple of virtue. Its labors he has yet to enter upon, its joys he has yet to sow and gather in. He goes into the society of the blessed, having thrown away his earthly probation, as the slothful student has wasted the hours of his school-time. He is without the pleasures of virtue, as the indolent scholar is without the pleasures of learning. His coming gives joy to the angels of God's presence, not because he is there so late, but because he is there at all. He is still doomed—is he not?—forever to feel the loss of the time he has mis-spent; and the foremost of that heavenly band he shall

never reach, as he goes on from one attainment to another and from the glories that are to the glories that are to come.

I must add likewise, that though we are forgiven of God, we are not so easily forgiven of ourselves. The past,—the perverted, neglected past! Who does not know how indelibly its stained lines are traced upon the memory? Who does not know, from the very laws of the human soul, how the polluted scenes of former guilt will come back with a sickening remembrance? Who has not felt the stings which the regret of folly inflicts? Who has not experienced that all the assurances friendship can give us of the forgiveness of an offence are powerless to wipe away the remembrance of the offence itself, are as ineffectual as bubbles of air to impart peace and satisfaction within? This is a part of our nature. This is the tribute we must pay to indulgence, disobedience and folly. It is the grinding extortion they demand of us, and sooner or later obtain. It is what I see not how we can escape, even after we are forgiven of God. And this consideration, it would seem, of itself alone if seriously pondered must be an all-sufficient antidote against delay, must operate like a death-omen to keep us back from presumptuous sins.

It has been remarked of the dying thief on the cross, that the Scriptures furnish us with one instance of accepted repentance in the hour of death, that we may not despair; and but one, that we may not presume. With this remark I leave the subject I have been considering. Brethren, let us carry this view with us into every scene of life. Let us not make God's mercy and forgiveness a ground of presumption for the neglect of duty, nor permit ourselves for an instant to trifle with our dearest interests. Forgiveness at best cannot restore what we have wilfully thrown away, nor blot out the remembrance of what is past and gone. Nevertheless, it is never too late to be wise. Even the sorrowful past may be made the spring and incentive to an ever-widening, ever-blissful good. So therefore if we have gone astray, in humility and penitence let us make as speedy a return as we can from the benighted way, and the smiles of our Father will greet us home again and rejoicing will be heard among the angels that are gathered in his presence.

NOTICES OF RECENT PUBLICATIONS.

BIBLICAL RESEARCHES IN PALESTINE, *Mount Sinai, and Arabia Petræa. A Journal of Travels in the year 1838 by E. Robinson and E. Smith, undertaken in reference to Biblical Geography. Drawn up from the Original Diaries, with Historical Illustrations, by Edward Robinson D. D. With new Maps and Plans in five Sheets. 3 vols. 8vo. pp. 571: 679: 721. Boston: Crocker & Brewster. 1841.*

IN naming these volumes our first purpose is to advise our readers not to allow their bulk and learned appearance to deter them from undertaking their perusal. The hard names, the geographical and meteorological observations, and the Arabic indexes might lead many persons to regard them as designed exclusively for scholars, but we can safely say that they contain nothing which will not be alike intelligible and interesting to all who value the Bible. Professor Robinson, already well known for his biblical attainments, had long cherished the purpose of visiting Palestine to qualify himself for preparing a work on the Geography of the Sacred Land, but the results of his researches have far exceeded his expectations. Notwithstanding the multiplicity of the works already existing upon this subject, in the shape of travels, rambles, maps and pictorial illustrations, the labours of his predecessors have done little to lighten his task. The Literature which relates to the Holy Land begins at the middle of the fourth century in monkish legends and the lives of ascetics and saints. From that period it is of but little value down to the time of the Crusades, and even then only faint gleams of light are cast upon the history of the region. Beginning again with the year 1400, an unbroken succession of travellers have published the results of their journeyings in Palestine. Scarcely one of their works is wholly without value or interest, but most of them are very imperfect and some cannot be relied upon as in any good degree accurate. Maundrell, Shaw, Clarke and Burckhardt have been the most pains taking in

the application of extensive learning to their subject, and consequently their works have been the most valuable. But another class of travellers, not so thorough or exact, such as Chateaubriand, Lamartine, Laborde, and our own countryman, Stephens, having adopted a more popular style, are better known to the reading community at large. Dr. Robinson implies that nearly all of his predecessors have been led into inaccuracies from having followed too implicitly the information of their ignorant Arab guides, and from being deceived by similarity between the name of a place in ancient times the locality of which is unknown, and the name now given to a place which they have met on their travels. In this way our numerous maps of Palestine are as closely covered with consecrated names as if the region were as well known as one of our own States. A map thus constructed may do very well in teaching the children of a Sunday school, but it will be of little service to a traveller in Palestine.

Dr. Robinson had all the preparation for his undertaking which deep scholarship, sound judgment, and a superiority to superstitious credulity can afford. There is less enthusiasm in his volumes than one might reasonably have expected to find there; but they contain the evidences of enlightened piety and of a truly Christian character. In passing over the regions upon which the Saviour of the world had trod, he seems never to have forgotten his Christian obligations. He and his party, amidst all the inconveniences of their mode of travel, maintained their seasons of daily devotion, hallowed the Christian Sabbath, and required of their Arab guides an observance of the laws of honesty. Dr. Robinson had for a companion the Rev. Eli Smith, American Missionary at "Beirut," who is thoroughly acquainted with the Arabic language, and by frequent excursions and tours in the East is familiar with the natives, with the mode of travel, and the objects to be kept in view. Thus the deficiencies of one being supplied by the attainments of the other, the fellowship was highly profitable.

We cannot undertake in our narrow limits to present any particulars of incident, description or discovery contained in these volumes. Dr. Robinson's main objects were to identify ancient sites and landmarks, to illustrate the Scriptures by the scenery, soil, products, people and customs of Palestine, and to aid future

travellers in their investigations. After crossing the ocean and visiting England, Germany and Austria, he examined some interesting localities in Greece and passed on to Alexandria. He followed the footsteps of innumerable tourists to the pyramids, tombs and other relics of ancient Egypt, and commenced his researches on the route from Cairo to Suez. After a thorough consideration of the whole bearings of the question concerning the route of the Israelites from Egypt to the desert, he adopts the opinion of Niebuhr, Le Clerc, and Rosenmüller, that the chosen people crossed the Red Sea very near to the modern Suez. He supposes them to have occupied the part of Egypt which is nearest to Palestine, thus making it easy for them to have traversed the intervening distance within the three days—the longest period which the narrative will admit. The miracle wrought in their behalf is represented in the Exodus as mediate, i. e. as a supernatural application of natural means. The waters of the Gulf near Suez are contracted and shallow, while above and below they expand and deepen. A strong wind from an easterly direction might lay bare the bed of the waters in this contracted and shallow part, while on each side they lay heaped like walls.

From Suez the travellers proceeded to the peninsula of Mount Sinai, between the two arms of the Sea, and made a long visit to the convent there. Their researches in this hallowed region were diligent and thorough, and the results crowned their highest hopes. Dr. R. decides upon the summit now called Horeb as the scene of the giving of the law. He found at its base an extensive and level interval walled in by solemn cliffs of granite, which would afford a resting place for the assembled multitudes of Israel. The very spot with its surrounding objects, retired, desolate and awful, seems to have been created with express design to the august spectacle which it once witnessed.

From the peninsula Dr. R. and his companion proceeded to the fortress of Akabah, at the head of the eastern arm of the Red Sea, and thence made their way to Jerusalem. The most labored and extended researches detailed in the volumes are those which relate to the history, topography and antiquities of the Holy City. We feel the utmost confidence in the results of the Author's difficult undertaking. He dismisses without any apparent regret the monkish

legends which pretend to identify every spot connected with both revelations, and seems to have forgotten them as soon as he heard them, that his whole interest might be devoted to something more substantial and worthy than a pious fraud. He presents us with a thorough and complete detail of measurements and ruins, and gives an interesting account of the modern city with its inhabitants. From Jerusalem as a central point Dr. R. made a series of excursions to all the interesting localities in the neighbourhood, identifying some places long since forgotten, substantiating some conjectures as to others, and presenting the merits of both sides of disputed questions.

The great charm of the volumes is the absence of all attempts at effect and the evidence of a sincere intention to state only the truth as distinct from invention and supposition. It is pleasant and encouraging to observe how calmly the faith of the Author stood the test of so thorough an examination of the regions which were sacredly associated with all his pious sentiments.

The volumes are full of details which throw light upon the Scriptures, and illustrate those customs of the people which in the East are unchanged by the revolutions of thousands of years. The maps may be depended upon for accuracy. Let not any one be deterred from undertaking the perusal of the work by the sight of its Arabic indexes, as these are intended only for scholars and future travellers. The principal contents of the work are free from all labored and scholastic learning, and are frequently made exceedingly interesting by the personal narratives and adventure which the Author has interwoven with more sober matter.

THE ANTIQUITIES OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH. *Translated and Compiled from the Works of Augusti, with numerous Additions from Reinhold, Siegel and others. By Rev. Lyman Coleman.* Andover: 1841. 8vo. pp. 557.

WE know not when we have been more disappointed in a work from which we had hoped to get valuable information. Whoever expects to obtain from this volume any clear conception of the con-

dition, character, views, institutions and rites of the ancient Christians, looks for what he will not find. It contains no well digested, methodical account of anything. It professes to be a translation and compilation from Augusti, Reinwold, Siegel, and others not named. Augusti has furnished the larger portion of the materials, but some corrections and additions have been made, as the Compiler informs us in his preface, notice of them sometimes being given, in other instances not, but "additional and qualifying words and sentences have been silently entered without any formal acknowledgment."

One of the circumstances which forcibly arrests the attention on reading the work, is the almost total disregard of Chronology observable in it. Every thing is huddled together in most strange confusion. Customs and institutions are spoken of without reference to the century even in which they originated or prevailed. This we need not say is a capital defect. Take any topic introduced in the book,—“Official Duties of the Bishop,” for example. The powers and duties of the Bishop, we know, have varied greatly in different ages of the Church; but if the reader wishes to ascertain how they were understood, explained, and exercised in any particular century, or period of the Church, he must have recourse to some other authority than the work before us. The *is* and the *was* are perpetually confounded by the Compiler. The same is true of nearly every topic treated in the volume. What must we think of such assertions as this—“The *primitive* Christians manifested a profound veneration for the house of God, and zealously guarded it not only against the intrusion of the profane, but against secular and sacrilegious uses;”—when, as every body knows, the primitive Christians had no Churches, but worshipped in private dwellings, caves, and whatever secure places they could find.

The verses given as a “Hymn from Ambrose” in Bishop Mant’s Version, the Compiler should have known, is attributed to that Father without authority. He should have known better, too, than to translate the “*carmen Christo quasi Deo dicere*” of Pliny, as the offering of a hymn, or prayer, to “Christ as God.” No Roman would have used the phrase in such a sense. It should be “as to a God,” or “some God,” as Melmoth has it.

The Compiler, however, uses no opportunity of reminding us of

the "Divine worship paid to Christ"—of the "Unity and Trinity of the Godhead implied in the devotions of the ancient Church"—of the doctrine of the Trinity as that on which "*the Church itself is based*;" and we know not whether we ought to be more provoked by his dogmatism, or amused at his absurdity. His comment on the phrase of Pliny is,—“It appears from this passage that these Christians were not only acquainted with the doctrine of the Divinity of Christ, but manifested great boldness in asserting it!” Again, we meet the astounding assertion, that “all the prayers and songs of the Church were directed to the *triune God*, or distinctly implied the doctrine of the Trinity!” A more audacious misstatement of historical fact we have seldom known. Again, “It [the Christian Religion] teaches not merely that prayer should be offered in the name of Jesus, but directly to him!” “Even the names [name ?] of God, Dominus,” [Lord] he tells us, “according to the Athanasian Creed expresses the idea of a triune God. The same sentiment is implied in the baptismal formulary; in the three elements of the Eucharist—the bread, the wine, and the water; and in the *three* great festivals of the ancient Church.” Proofs indeed! Worse things than these we might quote. But enough *ad nauseam*.

We regret that Dr. Sears, of the Newton Theological Institution, should have been induced to furnish an Introduction to a work, which we are sure he has too much good sense and scholarship to approve. We doubt however, from the language he employs, if he had read the *Compilation*; and indeed he speaks of it with great reserve and caution, and says that in some points he differs from both Author and Translator.

THE CHURCH. *A Discourse delivered in the First Congregational Unitarian Church of Philadelphia, Sunday, May 30th, 1841. By William E. Channing.* Printed by the request of the Society. Philadelphia: 1841. pp. 58, 8vo.

It may be rightly questioned, whether it is not owing to a denial of the importance of moral perfection as the supreme good, and to the substitution, in place of it in our regard, of some form, institu-

tion or sentiment, that Christianity is found to make so slow progress in the world ; that it inspires so few with reverence and love for its principles and Founder, and that so many in all Christian communities are left to irreligion, immorality and crime. Dr. Channing stands forth as the advocate of the soul's perfection, of the importance of ' the doing of the Sermon on the Mount,' of the attainment of Christ's spirit as the only essential in religion, to which nothing else is important except as it ministers. To be a member of the "true church" has been insisted upon as essential to salvation. Dr. Channing, in the Discourse before us, combats this idea in the sense in which it is usually intended, and unfolds his idea of the true church at length, with clearness, force and eloquence.

It is impossible within our limits to give a full analysis of his Discourse. The perfection of the soul, he says, is the chief thing ; nothing else is to be exalted above it. All other things are important only as they aid it. Hence, the church itself is important only in this point of view. The church cannot save us mechanically, nor in any mysterious way, but only by influences upon our hearts, such as may lead us to holiness. Its chief influences are to be found in the character of its minister, and in the character of its members. If the minister has ability to awaken the minds of his hearers, to supply the religious wants of their souls, to nourish them to spiritual life, it is of no consequence from what school he has come, or by what rites he has been ordained ; he carries his commission in his soul. And they are the true church too, not who worship in a consecrated place and with peculiar forms, but whose hearts sympathise in seeking God, and who animate and save one another by the warmth of their sympathy and the sincerity of their devotion.

In the next place, Dr. C. introduces to his hearers the subject of the Church Universal, spread over all lands, one with the Church in heaven. This church is built on union with the spirit of Christ. You may separate the disciple from Calvinistic, from Episcopal, from Roman Catholic communion, but no earthly power can separate the pious soul from union with Christ. The Roman Catholic church is to be honored for its adherence to the idea of a universal Church, but is to be condemned for attaching idolatrous importance to the external institution. We must shun sectarianism : to confine God's love or his good spirit to any sect, is to break that living bond with Christ's church which is one of the chief helps to perfection.

The Author next proceeds to consider the arguments adduced for the support of the claims of exclusive churches. The unlettered Christian however, he adds in a passage of great beauty, has an answer without study to all the volumes written to defend an exclusive church. Religion is to him an inward life, he has had experience of the love of God in his soul ; in this experience is his answer. Arguments, again, in defence of the exclusive church are continually losing their force, by the constant diffusion of the light of knowledge, by which men are learning to substitute realities in the place of forms. The spirit of Christianity is stronger than all forms.

Dr. Channing does not think lightly of the church. As a union of believers, it is sacred and blessed ; still the great aids of piety are secret, not public, and the church is important to the individual only as it leads his heart to God. Thus all churches may be good ; that is the best for me which is most efficacious for me ; to another another is best according to its influence upon him. But goodness is the only distinction in the sight of God, and the pursuit and practice of it constitute a ground on which all Christians may unite.

The Discourse is an eloquent, forcible, clear defence of realities against forms. It will be read by numbers of various sects, and by many who belong to no sect, with interest and with improvement. We have not attempted to do justice to its beauty, by this detail of its points of argument.

Address delivered at the Consecration of the Springfield Cemetery, September 5, 1841. By William B. O. Peabody. Springfield: 8vo. pp. 16.

THE beauty of this Address is its simplicity. It is less labored than those we have read or heard on similar occasions, and seems a perfectly natural and spontaneous expression of the feelings which such a theme and place awaken in all. We love the occasion, and rejoice in its now frequent recurrence. It is good for the community. It is good for our departing friends and for the surviving. Our nature prompts it, and our religion beautifully hallows it. From both, and for all, Mr. Peabody has drawn, and given the charm of his own style to the language of the heart.

INTELLIGENCE.

DEDICATION AT LITTLETON, MASS.—The meetinghouse lately erected by the First Parish in Littleton, was dedicated on Wednesday, September 8, 1841. The Introductory Prayer was offered by Rev. Mr. Bates of Ashby; portions of Scripture were read by Rev. Mr. Kingsley of Stow; the Dedictory Prayer was made by Rev. Mr. Miles of Lowell; the Sermon was delivered by Rev. Mr. White, the Pastor of the Society; the Concluding Prayer was offered by Rev. Mr. Wood of Tyngsboro'.

Mr. White, after some introductory remarks on the propriety of such an occasion, and the spirit which belonged to it, announced his text,—Matthew, xxi. 13,—“My house shall be called a house of prayer,”—words that were originally applied to the temple at Jerusalem, but that show the true character and proper service of any house for religious worship; in respect to its character, a house of God; in respect to its service, a house of prayer. It is God's house, and should be considered sacred. It is his in a high and spiritual sense, by the faith which erected it, by the service performed in it, by the blessings bestowed in it, by the promise resting on it. God is indeed every where, and may be acceptably worshipped any where; yet particular times and places are highly important, if not necessary for the developement of the spiritual man and the culture of the devotional sentiment. The truly religious man will not be anxious to understand the philosophy of this. So far as a house of worship is concerned, the preacher chose to attribute much to the uncommon presence of God. But the religious mind should be trustful, and not impatient to obtain a philosophical reason for every religious truth. Doubtless such a reason exists in the nature of the truth; but there is a faith of the heart which at once seizes on spiritual and eternal things, leaving the mind to find its way to the same truths more slowly in the developement of cause and effect.—The service proper for the house of worship is prayer. Prayer as an act of worship was defined to be—seeking from God, by a direct effort and special intercourse with Him, a specified good, a blessing we need. It implies an active, not a passive state of the mind and heart. It does not necessarily include words, but the soul must feel its need, and act on the strength of this feeling.—From these two leading sentiments of the text two others were deduced. First, reverence for the house of God as such. This is not a weak superstition, but a virtue, and the evidence of a sound mind; agreeable too to a law of our nature, which connects the

attributes and qualities of the great and good, the loved and honored, with places and objects to which they have borne or still bear a near relation. Reverence was insisted on, because much of the literature popular with a large portion of the community sports with the sentiments that would respect seasons and places consecrated by the will of God, by the regard of a long line of holy men, and by sacred associations; and because a kind of religion has sprung up, which would dispense with the sabbath, the temple, the church, and the ministry, as the rubbish that has come down from times of ignorance and superstition. Yet all history, confirmed by observation and experience, shows that the world owes to these institutions a debt of gratitude which it never will, for it never can, adequately appreciate, and never will, for it never can, repay. Reverence for God's house was also urged, because it would be a help to profitable engagement in its holy service of prayer. If this place were regarded, not as other places, but as the house of God, there would be sweet refreshings from the Lord, and a light to guide the pilgrim in his upward course.—The other inference from the doctrine of the text was, that all should come to the house of prayer, for all needed good—that which God alone could give; and all should come in the freedom of God's children, untrammelled by other faith than faith in God, in Jesus, in truth, and in the soul. Some errors in public worship were exposed. People come too much, to hear the preacher. Yet it is not so important, what we hear, as what we *are*, in the Divine presence. Our business is more with God's spirit, than with man's words. The question is not so much what the preacher said, as whether we prayed. Great indeed is the preacher's responsibility, but he cannot save the hearer: he can only point him to the star of Bethlehem, and bid him walk in its light; show him the cross, and say there lies your help. All were invited to come to that which is God's house, and not man's. The preacher then dedicated the house to God and to the service of prayer—the prayer of Christian faith, love and hope; and closed by exhorting the congregation to dedicate themselves as living temples to Almighty God, that his blessing might be on them.

In the evening religious service was again attended, and the Lord's Supper was partaken by about 150 communicants. Rev. Mr. Chandler of Shirley preached, and Rev. Messrs. Moore of Concord, Robinson of Medfield, and Bates of Ashby conducted the other services.

The meetinghouse was erected by the parish under peculiarly trying circumstances, but with uncommon unanimity and spirit. The parish is small, but of much moral strength and firmness. The town contains less than a thousand inhabitants, and this church is the last of four built within a year. But though last, it is not least. The house is of Grecian

architecture, of the Ionic order—62 feet by 44—with two pillars in front with a recess, and four deep pilasters. It has a belfry of irregular octagon form, with eight Ionic columns. Above this rises a perfect octagon with pilasters on the corners, and the whole is surmounted by a spire of octagon form. So perfect is the symmetry of its external form, that it presents to the eye an exceedingly neat and chaste appearance. The interior corresponds to the exterior. The gallery is circular, with large panel work. The pulpit, designed by a member of the parish, is of mahogany and without doors; in front eight feet, in height four; it has four columns supporting a rich desk, with beautiful panels between the columns; the ends of the seat are connected with heavy scroll-work, which coming forward forms convenient arms, as well as banisters to the stairs; the whole rests on a platform three feet high. The aisles and pulpit are neatly carpeted, and the house is well lighted. The whole cost about four thousand dollars.—The church stands on a slight elevation, and in quite a commanding position. In the language of another, "it stands like a picture in the midst of scenery that forms for it no unfitting frame-work."

AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR FOREIGN MISSIONS.—The 32d annual meeting of this important Association was held in Philadelphia on the 8th, 9th and 10th days of September, 1841. Hon. Theodore Frelinghuysen presided. Fifty of the corporate, and ninety-six of the honorary members of the Board were present. The missionary sermon was preached by Rev. Justin Edwards, D. D. of Andover. Various subjects in connexion with the interests of the Board were considered, and suggestions sanctioned by reports of Committees were adopted. A communication from certain ministers in New Hampshire complaining of the "studied silence of the Board upon the subject of American Slavery" was put into the hands of a Committee, of whom Rev. Dr. Woods of Andover was the chairman, who reported that in their view it was "a duty of the first importance to continue to pursue their one great object with undivided zeal, and to guard watchfully against turning aside from it or mixing any other concern with their appropriate work as a Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions." In regard to "a formal expression of the views and feelings of the Board respecting slavery, they did not think that such a measure is called for, or that it would be right or expedient." As a Board, it was plain that they could "have no connexion or sympathy with the system" of slavery, yet it was "equally evident that they could not be expected

to pass resolutions or adopt measures against the system, any more than against other specific forms of evil existing in the community." After some discussion the report was unanimously adopted, Rev. Dr. Palmer and Rev. Mr. Blodget of South Carolina expressing their belief that it would "satisfy all reasonable men;" for "all the South asks is, that the Board will attend to its own business."

The time of the Board was principally occupied in considering the state of the financial affairs. Although the receipts of the last year had considerably exceeded \$200,000, the debt had been increased from \$24,000 to nearly \$58,000, and the Prudential Committee had felt themselves compelled by the circumstances of encouragement which had arisen in connexion with several of the missions to make appropriations for the current year to the amount of \$273,000. The debt must be paid—not increased, and yet the missions must be sustained. It was a critical period. Some means must be devised for enlarging the resources of the Board. Earnest appeals were made by the Secretaries, the Treasurer, and the members of the Prudential Committee, who all pressed the absolute necessity of doing something before the close of the meeting. The contributions from most of the States the last year had decreased; in Massachusetts there had been an increase, and this State alone had contributed nearly one third of the whole income. The subject was entrusted to a Committee, of whom Chancellor Walworth was chairman, who reported resolutions in approbation of the course pursued by the Prudential Committee, and in recommendation of measures for raising the annual contribution of the churches to at least \$300,000. The resolutions were adopted, but as they did not propose a plan of action that would relieve the immediate wants of the treasury, the discussion was continued, till it resulted in pledges from most of the members present to increase their subscriptions at least 25 per cent, and in advising that similar pledges be obtained from the absent members and from "the churches which patronize the Board."

The next annual meeting was appointed to be held at Norwich, Conn., and Rev. Dr. DeWitt of Harrisburg, Penn., or in his absence Rev. Dr. Tyler of East Windsor, Conn., was appointed to preach on the occasion. A special meeting of the Board at an earlier date seeming to be demanded by the peculiar situation of affairs, it was resolved to hold such a meeting, in New York, January 18, 1842. Hon. John C. Smith having resigned his office as President on account of his state of health, Hon. Theodore Frelinghuysen LL. D., was elected *President*; Rev. Rufus Anderson D. D., Rev. David Greene, and Rev. William J. Armstrong D. D. *Secretaries*; Henry Hill Esq., *Treasurer*; Hon. Samuel Hubbard, Hon. Samuel T. Armstrong, John Tappan Esq., Daniel Noyes Esq., Rev. Nehemiah Adams, Rev. Silas Aikin, *Prudential Committee*.

It was stated at this meeting that intelligence had just been received of a remarkable movement among the Druzes of Mount Lebanon, who "have hitherto been regarded as a sect of Mohammedans." A community of about 100,000 souls has "determined to embrace Protestant Christianity, and has requested the American mission at Beyroot to take charge of their spiritual interests and supply them with teachers." A school has therefore been opened at their capital, which is about twenty miles southeast from Beyroot, and missionaries had gone to establish themselves there. Temporal or political considerations may have chiefly induced this movement, but it is not the less remarkable as affording an opportunity for the spread of the Gospel.

The success which attends the labours of the missionaries among the Nestorians of Persia and the Armenians of Constantinople is also deemed satisfactory.

BAPTIST TRIENNIAL CONVENTION.—This body, whose sole object is the promotion of foreign missions, assembled in Baltimore April 28, 1841, and continued its session several days. The Convention was formed in 1814 for foreign missionary purposes, and at first was fixed at Philadelphia, where its operations were conducted till 1823, when it was removed to Washington, and afterwards to Boston, where the business has been transacted for the last fifteen years. It is composed of representatives appointed by any church, association or individual who within the preceding three years has paid three hundred dollars for this object. Nearly every State in the Union was represented at Baltimore; about 250 delegates being present. Rev. Dr. Johnson of South Carolina was chosen President. The affairs of the Convention during the recess are conducted by a Board of Foreign Missions, consisting of 64 members, who are chosen at each triennial meeting. From their Report it appeared that they have under their direction twenty missions, viz: eight to Indian tribes, three in Europe, one to Western Africa, and eight to Asiatic tribes and nations. The receipts "during the year" were \$56,948 42; the expenditures \$61,860 27. Fears had been entertained that the introduction of the subject of Slavery would enkindle debate, or even occasion a breach between the Southern and Northern members of the Convention; but remarkable harmony prevailed, several members from the different sections of the country having at informal meetings agreed to adopt the principle, "that *no new tests* should be suffered to interfere with the harmonious operation of the benevolent

associations." On the Sunday which occurred during the meeting of the Convention, the members were invited to preach in most of the pulpits of the city, and the pulpits of five denominations of Christians were supplied by their ministrations. The next meeting was appointed to be held in Philadelphia.

The *American Baptist Home Mission Society* held their annual meeting in Baltimore April 27, 1841. During the previous year they had "commissioned 82 agents and missionaries, who had laboured in 20 of the States and Territories, in Canada and Texas, occupying not less than 300 stations." The agents and missionaries reported by auxiliary Societies are 223.

The *American Baptist Publication and Sabbath School Society* held their first anniversary April 28, 1841. The receipts of the year had been \$12,165 77; the expenditures \$11,425 29.

BELFAST ACADEMICAL INSTITUTION.—Through the kindness of a friend we have received several pamphlets and newspapers presenting the history of a struggle in which, however distant from us, we cannot, whether as Unitarians or as the friends of religious liberty, but take a deep interest. The result must determine the character, and may decide the fate of an institution which, next after the Manchester New College, is of all the academical establishments of the United Kingdom that with which we can have the closest sympathy. The "Royal Belfast Academical Institution" is the principal Seminary in the North of Ireland. It has been in operation many years, and consists of Schools, a Collegiate Department, and such provision for instruction in Theology as may be established by "any ecclesiastical body." In February 1818 a "Board of Faculty" was constituted, "to superintend the literary concerns of the Collegiate Department," consisting of the Professors in that department, "and the Professors of Theology and Church History appointed to lecture in the Institution." Over the proceedings of this Board a general superintendence is exercised by the "Joint Boards of Managers and Visitors," while the ultimate decision on important questions rests with the "Court of Proprietors."

Some time in 1838, the "Association of Non-Subscribing Presbyterians," comprising the Synod of Munster, the Presbytery of Antrim, and the Remonstrant Synod of Ulster, and constituting in point of fact the liberal portion of the Presbyterian Church in the North of Ireland, ap-

pointed Rev. Dr. Montgomery, and Rev. John Scott Porter, Professors of Theology, and in November last requested for them "accommodation for the delivery of their lectures within the Institution, and the same privileges and rank as are assigned to the Professors of the different branches of Theology belonging to the other religious bodies." This request was granted by the Joint Boards,—it could not have been refused without violating the principle of anti-sectarianism, on which the Institution had been from the first recommended to public favor, and on the ground of which a large part of the subscriptions for its support had been given,—and Dr. Montgomery and Mr. Porter were made members of the Faculty. Immediately the storm which had been gathering its fury and not indistinctly threatening vengeance for more than six years burst forth. Six members of the Board of Faculty, four of whom were clergymen, thought proper to convey to the Joint Boards their "solemn disapprobation of the measure, and their determination not to be members of the Faculty, should it be so constituted." The Joint Boards replied by simply referring the discontented Professors to the original constitution of the Faculty, which, inasmuch as the gentlemen against whom the complaint was entered had been appointed to lecture in the Institution by one of the regular ecclesiastical bodies of the land, rendered it imperative to admit them to a seat on that Board. The "College Committee" of the Presbyterian General Assembly then took up the matter, and addressed a long communication to the Joint Boards, in which they declared their purpose "to resist to the utmost the intrusion of Arianism into the vitals of the Institution, by the appointment of two most prominent supporters of Arianism to its highest trust, *on the sole ground of their being teachers of a system insulting to God, and subversive of the foundations of Christianity.*" In reply to this communication, which heaped insults upon the majority of the members, the Joint Boards condescended to assign the principal reasons which induced, or rather compelled them to take the course which they had adopted, "determined," as they were, "to allow no ascendancy to any religious body, in an Institution established for the education of all denominations." The Orthodox party having avowed their "unalterable resolution" to eject the new Professors, if possible, from a place in the Faculty, of course were not satisfied with these reasons and demanded a general meeting of the Court of Proprietors to consider the application of the College Committee, and as they hoped, to reverse the decision of the Joint Boards. The Liberal friends of the Institution at once requested that a general meeting of the Proprietors might also be called, "to take into consideration the propriety of removing the Theological Professors, of every denomination, from the Faculty of Arts, and to adopt the necessary measures for that object; and also, to con-

sider and adopt such other measures as may be necessary for enforcing the authority of the Joint Boards ;"—the principles for which they contended being only, equal justice towards Professors appointed by any religious denomination, and the exclusion of sectarianism from the management of the Institution.

On these two requisitions a meeting of the Proprietors was called for the 13th of April 1841. At this important meeting, after some preliminary measures, a motion was offered by Rev. Dr. Cooke, and seconded by Rev. Professor Edgar :—

"That the meeting refuse to sanction the appointment of the Rev. Dr. Montgomery and the Rev. John Scott Porter to seats in the Board of Faculty, as such appointment is opposed to the intentions of the great mass of the founders of the Institution, a violation of the solemn compact entered into with the Synod of Ulster, the Presbyterian Secession Synod, [the Orthodox ecclesiastical bodies,] and the Government of the country, [from whom the Institution receives an annual grant of £1500,] and also an assumption of power by the Boards, for augmenting classes, which they do not profess :"—

Each of which positions is denied, and was disproved, by the other party. Dr. Cooke made a long speech, and Dr. Edgar said a few words in support of the motion. Robert M'Dowell Esq. moved an amendment, to the effect that the Proprietors

"Approve most cordially of the resolutions of the Joint Boards, with reference to the application from the Association of 'Non-Subscribing Presbyterians,' and to the other communications which had been presented to them ; and that warm thanks are due to the Joint Boards, for the firmness and ability, with which they have maintained the independence of this Institution, and its fundamental principle, namely, the equal and impartial treatment of all religious sects within its walls."

After some remarks by Mr. M'Dowell, Dr. Montgomery rose to second the amendment, and addressed the meeting in a speech of great length and remarkable power, in which he exposed the falsehoods and machinations of those opposed to him with a severity for which there was doubtless ample provocation, but which has given us more pain than pleasure in the perusal. The debate was continued by other gentlemen, particularly by Mr. James Gibson, who although he had a "strong aversion," to the Arian belief, "conceded the right of the Arian party to have Professors admitted," and urged "the adoption of some middle course." An adjournment of the meeting was called for, but negatived by a large majority. The vote was then taken on Mr. M'Dowell's motion, which "was carried by a majority of about three to one."

The exclusive party did not relax their exertions upon this defeat, but finding they could neither intimidate the Joint Boards nor mislead the Proprietors, resorted to a measure which shows their "unalterable resolution" to destroy the Institution, if they cannot bring it under their

own control. The Committee of the General Assembly immediately ordered the Orthodox students to return home before the regular close of the session, thus prostrating the discipline of the College. A meeting was held in one of their churches on the 30th of April, at which Rev. Drs. Hanna, Edgar, and Reid did their utmost to enkindle the prejudices of the audience against Unitarianism, and at which it was resolved to present a petition to the House of Commons, "to institute an enquiry into the state of the Collegiate department of the Institution, with a view to remove existing grievances, and place this public institution on such a foundation as that it may be a useful Seminary of education for the ministry of the Presbyterian Church of Ireland,"—by removing Arians from all share in its management, their presence being sufficient to neutralize its usefulness! The Liberal party also held a public meeting at one of the churches in Belfast on the 25th of May, at which Dr. Montgomery, the Messrs. Porter and others spoke. The war—such we grieve to style it, though it be on one side a war of self-defence, for liberty and life—is at its height. The result we think we can foresee. The Institution will be thrown upon the sympathies of the Liberal—not merely the Arian—portion of the people in the North of Ireland. By them it will be sustained, although the removal of the Orthodox students must produce a great diminution in the attendance. Parliament may appoint a Committee to investigate the truth of the allegations set forth in the Petition; that Committee, under the guidance of Orthodox prepossessions may pronounce the presence of Arianism within the walls fatal to usefulness; the House of Commons may withhold its annual grant; the Institution may be unable to support its Professors without this aid, and its doors may be closed; or the friends of liberal principles may rally around it with an energy and a munificence that shall supply the place of patronage from the Government. In either case, whether the whole public, or only that part who choose to wear the harness of bigotry, be the sufferers, the consequences must be charged upon them who prefer sectarianism to truth and justice.

The personality which has marked this controversy is not the least painful circumstance. It appears on both sides, and deforms a good, as well as aggravates the offence of a bad, cause. Extenuation may be found in the nature of the attacks by which the Liberal party had been worried till patience could endure no more, and something may be allowed to Irish temperament or habit; but such severity of personal remark can only, we fear, stimulate resentful passions, and make the strife of Christians a proverb in the mouths of the irreligious. To us too it seems, that it might have been better to waive the claim which the Liberal Professors or their friends for them had a right to enforce,

and "to proceed as they had already done for two winters after their appointment;" and this view, we observe, has been taken by one of the Belfast ministers, who allows that "the decision to which the Joint Boards came was unavoidable." Still the encroachments or the provocations of the other party may have been such as to compel the Arian Professors to insist upon all their rights. The ground which they have now taken they cannot relinquish; yet we trust it will be maintained in "the meekness of wisdom."

CASE OF THE AUTHOR OF THE "LIVING TEMPLE."—We mentioned some months since, that the Author of "The True Plan of a Living Temple,"—Rev. Mr. Wright, of Borthwick, near Edinburgh, whose principal work is known in this country by the abridgement published in Boston a few years ago, but who has written several other volumes similar in their design and tone of sentiment,—had fallen under the rebuke of his ecclesiastical brethren. We now learn that he has been deposed from his ministry by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. At their last meeting the case was presented on appeals from "proceedings of the Presbytery of Dalkeith, and from a finding of the Synod of Lothian and Tweeddale." The respective parties having been heard on the 22d of May, the sentence of the Presbytery and Synod was affirmed, though not without the "entering of several dissents." This however was only a preliminary measure. On the 24th parties were again heard, an interesting and animated debate took place, and a motion "that the libel be found proven" was carried by a majority of 110. Mr. Wright having been "duly called, and failed to appear," the Moderator proceeded to pronounce sentence of deposition, which our readers may be curious to see as a specimen of Protestant assumption. "The General Assembly hereby do, in the name and by the authority* of the Lord Jesus Christ, the sole King and Head of this Church, depose Thomas Wright from the office of the holy ministry, prohibiting and discharging him from exercising the same, or any part thereof, under the pain of the highest censures of the Church; they appoint intimation of this sentence to be made from the pulpits of the parishes within the Presbytery of Dalkeith; they declare the parish of Borthwick

* The obvious meaning of this clause is, that the General Assembly exercise the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ. What higher pretension did the Roman Catholic Church ever advance?

vacant, and appoint the Moderator to intimate the vacancy of the said church and parish to the patron, that it may be in due time supplied.

So do the dominant party in the Established Church of Scotland think to eradicate and prevent heresy. So do they hope to preserve what some one has happily called their "fossile theology,"—not where it might be preserved, in the libraries of the learned, as the relics of an older world are kept in museums, but in the heads and hearts of a living generation. It is stated however; that these "proceedings against a truly good and religious man and an exemplary parish minister have not been able to mar his usefulness, or estrange from him the affections of his parishioners, whose sympathies have been vividly called forth by the persecution of their minister. The same sympathies, it is asserted, are shared by the laity and a respectable body of the clergy of Scotland." The party by whose votes Mr. Wright has been deposed is the same which resists so earnestly the interference of the government with the will of the people in the election of their ministers, and it is asked with some point, how these proceedings shall be reconciled with that regard for the independence and rights of 'the Christian people,' which this party professes. The answer may probably be found in the fact, that Mr. Wright's offence relates to doctrine, which the General Assembly have no intention of leaving to the decision of the people. The course pursued in this instance is the more remarkable, from the fact that the last of the four volumes composing the series condemned by the Assembly was published ten years, and the first of them about twenty years ago; and meanwhile the Orthodoxy of the Church has expressed no alarm, till it now suddenly wakes up to a sense of danger and casts out the offender. A supplementary work appeared in 1837.

SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION.—The annual meeting of "this valuable and growing Society" was held in London, June 2, 1841. The anniversary is celebrated by a breakfast, to which tickets are furnished at a low price, and at which the Report is read and Addresses are made. "Nearly one hundred persons" sat down this year. Rev. Mr. Murch of Bath presided. From the Report it appeared that about forty-five Schools are now in connexion with the Association. Several gentlemen addressed the company, and "the meeting broke up highly pleased with the proceedings of the morning."